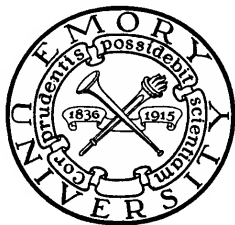






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# LOTHAIR.

BY THE

RIGHT HONORABLE B. DISRAELI.

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'Nōsse omnia hæc salus est adolescentulis.'

TERENTIUS.

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*IN THREE VOLUMES.*

VOL. II.

LONDON :  
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# LOTHAIR.



## CHAPTER I.

WHEN the stranger, who had proved so opportune an ally to Lothair at the Fenian meeting, separated from his companion, he proceeded in the direction of Pentonville, and, after pursuing his way through a number of obscure streets, but quiet, decent, and monotonous, he stopped at a small house in a row of many residences, yet all of them in form, size, colour, and general character so identical, that the number on the door could alone assure the visitor that he was not in error when he sounded the knocker.

‘Ah! is it you, Captain Bruges?’ said

the smiling and blushing maiden who answered to his summons. 'We have not seen you for a long time.'

'Well, you look as kind and as pretty as ever, Jenny,' said the Captain, 'and how is my friend?'

'Well,' said the damsel, and she shrugged her shoulders, 'he mopes. I'm very glad you have come back, Captain, for he sees very few now, and is always writing. I cannot bear that writing; if he would only go and take a good walk, I am sure he would be better.'

'There is something in that,' said Captain Bruges. 'And is he at home, and will he see me?'

'Oh! he is always at home to you, Captain; but I will just run up and tell him you are here. You know it is long since we have seen you, Captain—coming on half a year, I think.'

'Time flies, Jenny. Go, my good girl, and I will wait below.'

'In the parlour, if you please, Captain

Bruges. It is to let now. It is more than a month since the Doctor left us. That was a loss, for as long as the Doctor was here, he always had some one to speak with.'

So Captain Bruges entered the little dining-room, with its mahogany table, and half-a-dozen chairs, and cellaret, and over the fireplace a portrait of Garibaldi, which had been left as a legacy to the landlady by her late lodger, Dr. Tresorio.

The Captain threw a quick glance at the print, and then falling into reverie, with his hands crossed behind him, paced the little chamber, and was soon lost in thoughts which made him unconscious how long had elapsed when the maiden summoned him.

Following her, and ascending the staircase, he was ushered into the front room of the first floor, and there came forward to meet him a man rather below the middle height, but of a symmetrical and imposing mien. His face was grave, not to say sad; thought, not time, had partially silvered the clustering of his raven hair;

but intellectual power reigned in his wide brow, while determination was the character of the rest of his countenance, under great control, yet apparently, from the dark flashing of his eye, not incompatible with fanaticism.

‘General,’ he exclaimed, ‘your presence always reanimates me. I shall at least have some news on which I can rely. Your visit is sudden — sudden things are often happy ones. Is there anything stirring in the promised land? Speak, speak! You have a thousand things to say, and I have a thousand ears.’

‘My dear Mirandola,’ replied the visitor, ‘I will take leave to call into council a friend whose presence is always profitable.’

So saying, he took out a cigar-case, and offered it to his companion.

‘We have smoked together in palaces,’ said Mirandola, accepting the proffer with a delicate white hand.

‘But not these cigars,’ replied the General. ‘They are superb, my only reward

for all my transatlantic work, and sometimes I think a sufficient one.'

'And Jenny shall give us a capital cup of coffee,' said Mirandola; 'it is the only hospitality that I can offer my friends. Give me a light, my General; and now, how are things?'

'Well, at the first glance, very bad; the French have left Rome, and we are not in it.'

'Well, that is an infamy not of to-day or yesterday,' replied Mirandola, 'though not less an infamy. We talked over this six months ago, when you were over here about something else, and from that moment unto the present I have with unceasing effort laboured to erase this stigma from the human consciousness, but with no success. Men are changed; public spirit is extinct; the deeds of '48 are to the present generation as incomprehensible as the Punic wars or the feats of Marius against the Cimbri. What we want are the most natural things in the world, and easy of attainment

because they are natural. We want our metropolis, our native frontiers, and true liberty. Instead of these we have compromises, conventions, provincial jealousies, and French prefects. It is disgusting, heartrending; sometimes I fear my own energies are waning. My health is wretched; writing and speaking are decidedly bad for me, and I pass my life in writing and speaking. Towards evening I feel utterly exhausted, and am sometimes, which I thought I never could be, the victim of despondency. The loss of the Doctor was a severe blow, but they harried him out of the place. The man of Paris would never rest till he was gone. I was myself thinking of once more trying Switzerland, but the obstacles are great; and, in truth, I was at my darkest moment when Jenny brought me the light of your name.'

The General, who had bivouacked on a group of small chairs, his leg on one, his elbow on another, took his cigar from his mouth and delivered himself of a volume of smoke, and then said dryly, ' Things may

not be so bad as they seem, comrade. Your efforts have not been without fruit. I have traced them in many quarters, and, indeed, it is about their possible consequences that I have come over to consult with you.'

'Idle words, I know, never escape those lips,' said Mirandola; 'speak on.'

'Well,' said the General, 'you see that people are a little exhausted by the efforts of last year; and it must be confessed that no slight results were accomplished. The freedom of Venice——'

'A French intrigue,' exclaimed Mirandola. 'The freedom of Venice is the price of the slavery of Rome. I heard of it with disgust.'

'Well, we do not differ much on that head,' said the General. 'I am not a Roman as you are, but I view Rome, with reference to the object of my life, with feelings not less ardent and absorbing than yourself, who would wish to see it again the empress of the world. I am a soldier,



and love war, and, left to myself, would care little perhaps for what form of government I combated, provided the army was constituted on the principles of fraternity and equality; but the passion of my life, to which I have sacrificed military position, and perhaps,' he added in a lower tone, 'perhaps even military fame, has been to destroy priestcraft, and, so long as the Pope rules in Rome, it will be supreme.'

'We have struck him down once,' said Mirandola.

'And I hope we shall again, and for ever,' said the General, 'and it is about that I would speak. You are in error in supposing that your friends do not sympathise with you, or that their answers are dilatory or evasive. There is much astir; the old spirit is not extinct, but the difficulties are greater than in former days when we had only the Austrians to encounter, and we cannot afford to make another failure.'

'There could be no failure if we were

clear and determined. There must be a hundred thousand men who would die for our metropolis, our natural frontiers, and true liberty. The mass of the pseudo-Italian army must be with us. As for foreign interference its repetition seems to me impossible. The brotherhood in the different countries, if well guided, could alone prevent it. There should be at once a manifesto addressed to the peoples. They have become absorbed in money-grubbing and what they call industry. The external life of a nation is its most important one. A nation, as an individual, has duties to fulfil appointed by God and His moral law: the individual towards his family, his town, his country; the nation towards the country of countries, humanity—the outward world. I firmly believe that we fail and renounce the religious and divine element of our life whenever we betray or neglect those duties. The internal activity of a nation is important and sacred because it prepares the instrument for its appointed

task. It is mere egotism if it converges towards itself, degrading and doomed to expiation—as will be the fate of this country in which we now dwell,’ added Mirandola in a hushed voice. ‘England had a mission : it had belief, and it had power. It announced itself the representative of religious, commercial, and political freedom, and yet, when it came to action, it allowed Denmark to be crushed by Austria and Prussia, and, in the most nefarious transaction of modern times, uttered the approving shriek of “ Perish Savoy ! ” ’

‘My dear Mirandola,’ said the General, trimming his cigar, ‘there is no living man who appreciates your genius and your worth more than myself ; perhaps I might say there is no living man who has had equal opportunities of estimating them. You formed the mind of our country ; you kindled and kept alive the sacred flame when all was gloom, and all were without heart. Such prodigious devotion, so much resource and pertinacity and patience, such

unbroken spirit, were never before exhibited by man, and, whatever may be said by your enemies, I know that in the greatest hour of action you proved equal to it; and yet at this moment, when your friends are again stirring, and there is a hope of spring, I am bound to tell you that there are only two persons in the world who can effect the revolution, and you are not one of them.'

'I am ardent, my General, perhaps too sanguine, but I have no self-love, at least none when the interests of the great cause are at stake. Tell me then their names, and count, if required, on my co-operation.'

'Garibaldi and Mary-Anne.'

'A Polchinello and a Bayadere!' exclaimed Mirandola, and, springing from his seat, he impatiently paced the room.

'And yet,' continued the General calmly, 'there is no manner of doubt that Garibaldi is the only name that could collect ten thousand men at any given point in Italy; while in France, though her influence is

mythical, the name of Mary-Anne is a name of magic. Though never mentioned, it is never forgotten. And the slightest allusion to it among the initiated will open every heart. There are more secret societies in France at this moment than at any period since '85, though you hear nothing of them; and they believe in Mary-Anne, and in nothing else.'

'You have been at Caprera?' said Mirandola.

'I have been at Caprera.'

'And what did he say?'

'He will do nothing without the sanction of the Savoyard.'

'He wants to get wounded in his other foot,' said Mirandola with savage sarcasm.

'Will he never weary of being betrayed?'

'I found him calm and sanguine,' said the General.

'What of the woman?'

'Garibaldi will not move without the Savoyard, and Mary-Anne will not move without Garibaldi; that is the situation.'

‘ Have you seen her?’

‘ Not yet; I have been to Caprera, and I have come over to see her and you. Italy is ready for the move, and is only waiting for the great man. He will not act without the Savoyard; he believes in him. I will not be sceptical. There are difficulties enough without imagining any. We have no money, and all our sources of supply are drained; but we have the inspiration of a sacred cause, we have you—we may gain others—and, at any rate, the French are no longer at Rome.’

## CHAPTER II.

‘THE Goodwood Cup, my Lord — the Doncaster. This pair of flagons for his Highness the Khedive—something quite new—yes, parcel-gilt, the only style now—it gives relief to design—yes, by Monti, a great man, hardly inferior to Flaxman, if at all. Flaxman worked for Rundell and Bridge in the old days — one of the principal causes of their success. Your Lordship’s gold service was supplied by Rundell and Bridge. Very fine service indeed, much by Flaxman — nothing of that kind seen now.’

‘I never did see it,’ said Lothair. He was replying to Mr. Ruby, a celebrated jeweller and goldsmith, in a celebrated street, who had saluted him when he had entered the shop, and called the at-

tention of Lothair to a group of treasures of art.

‘Strange,’ said Mr. Ruby, smiling. ‘It is in the next room, if your Lordship would like to see it. I think your Lordship should see your gold service. Mr. Putney Giles ordered it here to be examined and put in order.’

‘I should like to see it very much,’ said Lothair, ‘though I came to speak to you about something else.’

And so Lothair, following Mr. Ruby into an inner apartment, had the gratification, for the first time, of seeing his own service of gold plate laid out in completeness, and which had been for some time exhibited to the daily admiration of that favoured portion of the English people who frequent the brilliant and glowing counters of Mr. Ruby.

Not that Lothair was embarrassed by their presence at this moment. The hour of their arrival had not yet come. Business had not long commenced when Lothair



entered the shop, somewhat to the surprise of its master. Those who know Bond Street only in the blaze of fashionable hours can form but an imperfect conception of its matutinal charm, when it is still shady and fresh—when there are no carriages, rarely a cart, and passers-by gliding about on real business. One feels as in some continental city. Then there are time and opportunity to look at the shops; and there is no street in the world that can furnish such a collection, filled with so many objects of beauty, curiosity, and interest. The jewellers and goldsmiths and dealers in rare furniture; porcelain, and cabinets, and French pictures; have long fixed upon Bond Street as their favourite quarter, and are not chary of displaying their treasures; though it may be a question whether some of the magazines of fancy food—delicacies culled from all the climes and regions of the globe—particularly at the matin hour, may not, in their picturesque variety, be the most attractive.

The palm, perhaps, would be given to the fishmongers, with their exuberant exhibitions, grouped with skill, startling often with strange forms, dazzling with prismatic tints, and breathing the invigorating redolence of the sea.

‘Well, I like the service,’ said Lothair, ‘and am glad, as you tell me, that its fashion has come round again, because there will now be no necessity for ordering a new one. I do not myself much care for plate. I like flowers and porcelain on a table, and I like to see the guests. However, I suppose it is all right, and I must use it. It was not about plate that I called; I wanted to speak to you about pearls.’

‘Ah!’ said Mr. Ruby, and his face brightened; and ushering Lothair to some glass cases, he at the same time provided his customer with a seat.

‘Something like that?’ said Mr. Ruby, who by this time had slid into his proper side of the counter, and was unlocking the

glass cases; 'something like that?' and he placed before Lothair a string of pretty pearls with a diamond clasp. 'With the earrings, twenty-five hundred,' he added; and then, observing that Lothair did not seem enchanted, he said, 'This is something quite new,' and he carelessly pushed towards Lothair a magnificent necklace of turquoises and brilliants.

It was impossible not to admire it—the arrangement was so novel and yet of such good taste; but though its price was double that of the pearl necklace, Mr. Ruby did not seem to wish to force attention to it, for he put in Lothair's hands almost immediately the finest emerald necklace in the world, and set in a style that was perfectly ravishing.

'The setting is from the Campana collection,' said Mr. Ruby. 'They certainly understood things in those days, but I can say that, so far as mere workmanship is concerned, this quite equals them. I have made one for the Empress. Here is a

black pearl, very rare, pear shape, and set in Golconda diamonds—two thousand guineas—it might be suspended to a necklace, or worn as a locket. This is pretty,’ and he offered to Lothair a gigantic sapphire in brilliants and in the form of a bracelet.

‘The finest sapphire I know is in this ring,’ added Mr. Ruby, and he introduced his visitor to a tray of precious rings. ‘I have a pearl bracelet here that your Lordship might like to see,’ and he placed before Lothair a case of fifty bracelets, vying with each other in splendour.

‘But what I want,’ said Lothair, ‘are pearls.’

‘I understand,’ said Mr. Ruby. ‘This is a curious thing,’ and he took out a paper packet. ‘There!’ he said, opening it and throwing it before Lothair so carelessly that some of the stones ran over the glass covering of the counter. ‘There, that is a thing not to be seen every day—a packet of diamonds, bought of an Indian prince, and sent by us to be cut and polished at

Amsterdam — nothing can be done in that way except there — and just returned — nothing very remarkable as to size, but all of high quality—some fine stones—that for example,’ and he touched one with the long nail of his little finger; ‘that is worth seven hundred guineas, the whole packet worth perhaps ten thousand pounds.’

‘Very interesting,’ said Lothair, ‘but what I want are pearls. That necklace which you have shown me is like the necklace of a doll. I want pearls, such as you see them in Italian pictures—Titians and Giorgiones—such as a Queen of Cyprus would wear. I want ropes of pearls.’

‘Ah!’ said Mr. Ruby, ‘I know what your Lordship means. Lady Bideford had something of that kind. She very much deceived us—always told us her necklace must be sold at her death, and she had very bad health. We waited, but when she went, poor lady, it was claimed by the heir, and is in Chancery at this very moment. The Justinianis have ropes of pearls—

Madame Justiniani of Paris, I have been told, gives a rope to every one of her children when they marry—but there is no expectation of a Justiniani parting with anything. Pearls are troublesome property, my Lord. They require great care; they want both air and exercise; they must be worn frequently; you cannot lock them up. The Duchess of Havant has the finest pearls in this country, and I told her Grace, “Wear them whenever you can; wear them at breakfast,” and her Grace follows my advice—she does wear them at breakfast. I go down to Havant Castle every year to see her Grace’s pearls, and I wipe every one of them myself, and let them lie on a sunny bank in the garden, in a westerly wind, for hours and days together. Their complexion would have been ruined had it not been for this treatment. Pearls are like girls, my Lord—they require quite as much attention.’

‘Then you cannot give me what I want?’ said Lothair.

‘ Well, I can, and I cannot,’ said Mr. Ruby. ‘ I am in a difficulty. I have in this house exactly what your Lordship requires, but I have offered them to Lord Topaz, and I have not received his answer. We have instructions to inform his Lordship of every very precious jewel that we obtain, and give him the preference as a purchaser. Nevertheless there is no one I could more desire to oblige than your Lordship—your Lordship has every claim upon us, and I should be truly glad to find these pearls in your Lordship’s possession if I could only see my way. Perhaps your Lordship would like to look at them?’

‘ Certainly, but pray do not leave me here alone with all these treasures,’ said Lothair, as Mr. Ruby was quitting the apartment.

‘ Oh! my Lord, with you!’

‘ Yes, that is all very well; but if anything is missed hereafter, it will always be remembered that these jewels were in my

possession, and I was alone. I highly object to it.' But Mr. Ruby had vanished, and did not immediately reappear. In the meantime it was impossible for Lothair to move: he was alone and surrounded with precious necklaces, and glittering rings, and gorgeous bracelets, with loose diamonds running over the counter. It was not a kind or an amount of property that Lothair, relinquishing the trust, could satisfactorily deliver to a shopman. The shopman, however honest, might be suddenly tempted by Satan, and take the next train to Liverpool. He felt therefore relieved when Mr. Ruby re-entered the room, breathless, with a velvet casket. 'I beg pardon, my Lord, a thousand pardons, but I thought I would just run over to Lord Topaz, only in the square close by. His Lordship is at Madrid, the only city one cannot depend on communications with by telegraph. Spaniards strange people, very prejudiced, take all sorts of fancies in their head. Besides, Lord Topaz has more pearls



than he can know what to do with, and I should like your Lordship to see these,' and he opened the casket.

'Exactly what I want,' exclaimed Lothair; 'these must be the very pearls the Queen of Cyprus wore. What is their price?'

'They are from Genoa and belonged to a Doge,' said Mr. Ruby; 'your Lordship shall have them for the sum we gave for them. There shall be no profit on the transaction, and we shall be proud of it. We gave for them four thousand guineas.'

'I will take them with me,' said Lothair, who was afraid, if he left them behind, Lord Topaz might arrive in the interval.

## CHAPTER III.

LOTHAIR had returned home from his last visit to Belmont agitated by many thoughts, but, generally speaking, deeply musing over its mistress. Considerable speculation on religion, the Churches, the solar system, the cosmical order, the purpose of creation, and the destiny of man, was maintained in his too rapid progress from Roehampton to his Belgravian hotel; but the association of ideas always terminated the consideration of every topic by a wondering and deeply interesting enquiry when he should see her again. And here, in order to simplify this narrative, we will at once chronicle the solution of this grave question. On the afternoon of the next day, Lothair mounted his horse with the intention of calling on Lady St. Jerome, and

perhaps some other persons, but it is curious to observe that he soon found himself on the road to Roehampton, where he was in due time paying a visit to Theodora. But what is more remarkable is that the same result occurred every day afterwards. Regularly every day he paid a visit to Belmont. Nor was this all; very often he paid two visits, for he remembered that in the evening Theodora was always at home. Lothair used to hurry to town from his morning visit, dine at some great house, which satisfied the demands of society, and then drive down to Roehampton. The guests of the evening saloon, when they witnessed the high ceremony of Lothair's manner, which was natural to him, when he entered, and the welcome of Theodora, could hardly believe that a few hours only had elapsed since their separation.

And what was the manner of Theodora to him when they were alone? Precisely as before. She never seemed in the least surprised that he called on her every day,

or even twice a day. Sometimes she was alone, frequently she had companions, but she was always the same, always appeared gratified at his arrival, and always extended to him the same welcome, graceful and genial, but without a spark of coquetry. Yet she did not affect to conceal that she took a certain interest in him, because she was careful to introduce him to distinguished men, and would say, ' You should know him; he is master of such a subject. You will hear things that you ought to know.' But all this in a sincere and straightforward manner. Theodora had not the slightest affectation; she was always natural, though a little reserved. But this reserve appeared to be the result of modesty, rather than of any desire of concealment. When they were alone, though always calm, she would talk with freedom and vivacity, but in the presence of others she rather led to their display, and encouraged them, often with a certain degree of adroit simplicity, to descant on

topics which interested them, or of which they were competent to treat. Alone with Lothair, and they were often alone, though she herself never obtruded the serious subjects round which he was always fluttering, she never avoided them, and without involving herself in elaborate arguments, or degenerating into conversational controversy, she had a habit of asking a question, or expressing a sentiment, which greatly affected his feelings or perplexed his opinions.

Had not the season been long waning, this change in the life of Lothair must have been noticed, and its cause ultimately discovered. But the social critics cease to be observant towards the end of July. All the world then are thinking of themselves, and have no time to speculate on the fate and fortunes of their neighbours. The campaign is too near its close; the balance of the season must soon be struck, the great book of society made. In a few weeks, even in a few days, what long and

subtle plans shattered or triumphant!—what prizes gained or missed!—what baffled hopes, and what broken hearts! The baffled hopes must go to Cowes, and the broken hearts to Baden. There were some great ladies who did remark that Lothair was seldom seen at balls; and Hugo Bohun, who had been staying at his aunt Lady Gertrude's villa for change of air, did say to Bertram that he had met Lothair twice on Barnes Common, and asked Bertram if he knew the reason why. But the fact that Lothair was cruising in waters which their craft never entered combined with the lateness of the season to baffle all the ingenuity of Hugo Bohun, though he generally found out everything.

The great difficulty which Lothair had to apprehend was with his Roman Catholic friends. The system of the Monsignori was never to let him be out of sight, and his absence from the critical function had not only disappointed but alarmed them. But the Jesuits are wise men; they never

lose their temper. They know when to avoid scenes as well as when to make them. Monsignore Catesby called on Lothair as frequently as before, and never made the slightest allusion to the miscarriage of their expectations. Strange to say, the innocent Lothair, naturally so straightforward and so honourable, found himself instinctively, almost it might be said unconsciously, defending himself against his invaders with some of their own weapons. He still talked about building his cathedral, of which, not contented with mere plans, he even gave orders that a model should be made, and he still received statements on points of faith from Father Coleman, on which he made marginal notes and queries. Monsignore Catesby was not altogether satisfied. He was suspicious of some disturbing cause, but at present it baffled him. Their hopes, however, were high; and they had cause to be sanguine. In a month's time or so, Lothair would be in the country to celebrate his majority; his guardian the

Cardinal was to be his guest; the St. Jeromes were invited, Monsignore Catesby himself. Here would be opportunity and actors to avail themselves of it.

It was a very few days after the first evening visit of Lothair to Belmont that he found himself one morning alone with Theodora. She was in her bowery boudoir, copying some music for Madame Phœbus, at least in the intervals of conversation. That had not been of a grave character, but the contrary, when Lothair rather abruptly said, ‘Do you agree, Mrs. Campian, with what Mr. Phœbus said the other night, that the greatest pain must be the sense of death?’

‘Then mankind is generally spared the greatest pain,’ she replied, ‘for I apprehend few people are sensible of death—unless indeed,’ she added, ‘it be on the field of battle; and there, I am sure, it cannot be painful.’

‘Not on the field of battle?’ asked Lothair, inducing her to proceed.



‘Well, I should think for all, on the field of battle, there must be a degree of excitement, and of sympathetic excitement, scarcely compatible with overwhelming suffering ; but if death were encountered there for a great cause, I should rather associate it with rapture than pain.’

‘But still a good number of persons must die in their beds and be conscious,’ said Lothair.

‘It may be, though I should doubt it. The witnesses of such a demise are never impartial. All I have loved and lost have died upon the field of battle ; and those who have suffered pain have been those whom they have left behind ; and that pain,’ she added with some emotion, ‘may perhaps deserve the description of Mr. Phœbus.’

Lothair would not pursue the subject, and there was rather an awkward pause. Theodora herself broke it, and in a lighter vein, though recurring to the same theme, she said with a slight smile, ‘I am scarcely a

competent person to consult upon this subject, for, to be candid with you, I do not myself believe in death. There is a change, and doubtless a great one, painful it may be, certainly very perplexing, but I have a profound conviction of my immortality, and I do not believe that I shall rest in my grave in *sæcula sæculorum*, only to be convinced of it by the last trump.'

'I hope you will not leave this world before I do,' said Lothair; 'but if that sorrow be reserved for me, promise that to me, if only once, you will reappear.'

'I doubt whether the departed have that power,' said Theodora, 'or else I think my heroes would have revisited me. I lost a father more magnificent than Jove, and two brothers brighter than Apollo, and all of them passionately loved me—and yet they have not come; but I shall see them—and perhaps soon. So you see, my dear Lord,' speaking more briskly, and rising rather suddenly from her seat, 'that for my part I think it best to arrange all that

concerns one in this world while one inhabits it, and this reminds me that I have a little business to fulfil in which you can help me,' and she opened a cabinet and took out a flat antique case, and then said, resuming her seat at her table, 'Some one, and anonymously, has made me a magnificent present; some strings of costly pearls. I am greatly embarrassed with them, for I never wear pearls or anything else, and I never wish to accept presents. To return them to an unknown is out of my power, but it is not impossible that I may some day become acquainted with the donor. I wish them to be kept in safety, and therefore not by myself, for my life is subject to too great vicissitudes. I have therefore placed them in this case, which I shall now seal and entrust them to your care, as a friend in whom I have entire confidence. See,' she said, lighting a match, and opening the case, 'here are the pearls—are they not superb?—and here is a note which will

tell you what to do with them in case of my absence, when you open the case, which will not be for a year from this day. There it is locked. I have directed it to you, and I will seal it with my father's seal.'

Lothair was about to speak. 'Do not say a word,' she said; 'this seal is a religious ceremony with me.' She was some little time fulfilling it, so that the impression might be deep and clear. She looked at it earnestly while the wax was cooling, and then she said, 'I deliver the custody of this to a friend whom I entirely trust. Adieu !' and she disappeared.

The amazed Lothair glanced at the seal. It was a single word, 'ROMA,' and then, utterly mystified, he returned to town with his own present.

## CHAPTER IV.

MR. PHŒBUS had just finished a picture which he had painted for the Emperor of Russia. It was to depart immediately from England for its northern home, except that his Imperial Majesty had consented that it should be exhibited for a brief space to the people of England. This was a condition which Mr. Phœbus had made in the interests of art, and as a due homage alike to his own patriotism and celebrity.

There was to be a private inspection of the picture at the studio of the artist, and Mr. Phœbus had invited Lothair to attend it. Our friend had accordingly, on the appointed day, driven down to Belmont and then walked to the residence of Mr. Phœbus with Colonel Campian and his wife. It was a short and pretty walk,

entirely through the royal park, which the occupiers of Belmont had the traditionary privilege thus to use.

The residence of Mr. Phœbus was convenient and agreeable, and in situation not unlike that of Belmont, being sylvan and sequestered. He had himself erected a fine studio, and added it to the original building. The flower garden was bright and curious, and on the lawn was a tent of many colours designed by himself, and which might have suited some splendid field of chivalry. Upon gilt and painted perches also there were paroquets and macaws.

Lothair on his arrival found many guests assembled, chiefly on the lawn. Mr. Phœbus was highly esteemed, and had distinguished and eminent friends, whose constant courtesies the present occasion allowed him elegantly to acknowledge. There was a polished and grey-headed noble who was the head of the patrons of art in England, whose nod of approbation

sometimes made the fortune of a young artist, and whose purchase of pictures for the nation even the furious cognoscenti of the House of Commons dared not question. Some of the finest works of Mr. Phœbus were to be found in his gallery; but his Lordship admired Madame Phœbus even more than her husband's works, and Euphrosyne as much as her sister. It was sometimes thought, among their friends, that this young lady had only to decide in order to share the widowed coronet; but Euphrosyne laughed at everything, even her adorers; and while her witching mockery only rendered them more fascinated, it often prevented critical declarations.

And Lady Beatrice was there, herself an artist, and full of æsthetical enthusiasm. Her hands were beautiful, and she passed her life in modelling them. And Cecrops was there, a rich old bachelor, with, it was supposed, the finest collection of modern pictures extant. His theory was, that a man could not do a wiser thing than invest

the whole of his fortune in such securities, and it delighted him to tell his numerous nephews and nieces that he should, in all probability, leave his collection to the nation.

Clorinda, whose palace was always open to genius, and who delighted in the society of men who had discovered planets, excavated primæval mounds, painted pictures on new principles, or composed immortal poems which no human being could either scan or construe, but which she delighted in as 'subtle' and full of secret melody, came leaning on the arms of a celebrated plenipotentiary, and beaming with sympathy on every subject, and with the consciousness of her universal charms.

And the accomplished Sir Francis was there, and several R. A.s of eminence, for Phœbus was a true artist and loved the brotherhood, and always placed them in the post of honour.

No language can describe the fascinating costume of Madame Phœbus and her glitter-



ing sister. ‘They are habited as sylvans,’ the great artist deigned to observe, if any of his guests could not refrain from admiring the dresses which he had himself devised. As for the venerable patron of art in Britain, he smiled when he met the lady of the house, and sighed when he glanced at Euphrosyne; but the first gave him a beautiful flower, and the other fastened it in his button-hole. He looked like a victim bedecked by the priestesses of some old fane of Hellenic loveliness, and proud of his impending fate. What could the Psalmist mean in the immortal passage? Threescore and ten, at the present day, is the period of romantic passions. As for our enamoured sexagenarians they avenge the theories of our cold-hearted youth.

Mr. Phœbus was an eminent host. It delighted him to see people pleased, and pleased under his influence. He had a belief, not without foundation, that everything was done better under his roof than under that of any other person. The ban-

quet in the air on the present occasion could only be done justice to by the courtly painters of the reign of Louis XV. Vanloo, and Watteau, and Lancre's would have caught the graceful groups, and the well-arranged colours, and the faces, some pretty, some a little affected; the ladies on fantastic chairs of wicker-work, gilt and curiously painted; the gentlemen, reclining on the turf, or bending behind them with watchful care. The little tables, all different, the soups in delicate cups of Sèvres, the wines in golden glass of Venice, the ortolans, the Italian confectionery, the endless bouquets, were worthy of the soft and invisible music that resounded from the pavilion, only varied by the coquettish scream of some macaw, jealous amid all this novelty and excitement of not being noticed.

‘It is a scene of enchantment,’ whispered the chief patron of British art to Madame Phœbus.

‘I always think luncheon in the air rather jolly,’ said Madame Phœbus.

‘It is perfect romance!’ murmured the chief patron of British art to Euphrosyne.

‘With a due admixture of reality,’ she said, helping him to an enormous truffle, which she extracted from its napkin. ‘You know you must eat it with butter.’

Lothair was glad to observe that, though in refined society, none were present with whom he had any previous acquaintance, for he had an instinctive feeling that if Hugo Bohun had been there, or Bertram, or the Duke of Brecon, or any ladies with whom he was familiarly acquainted, he would scarcely have been able to avail himself of the society of Theodora with the perfect freedom which he now enjoyed. They would all have been asking who she was, where she came from, how long Lothair had known her, all those questions, kind and neighbourly, which under such circumstances occur. He was in a distinguished circle, but one different from that in which he lived. He sat next to Theodora, and Mr. Phœbus constantly

hovered about them, ever doing something very graceful, or saying something very bright. Then he would whisper a word to the great Clorinda, who flashed intelligence from her celebrated eyes, and then he made a suggestion to the æsthetical Lady Beatrice, who immediately fell into enthusiasm and eloquence, and took the opportunity of displaying her celebrated hands.

The time had now arrived when they were to repair to the studio and view the picture. A curtain was over it, and then a silken robe across the chamber, and then some chairs. The subject of the picture was Hero and Leander, chosen by the heir of all the Russias himself, during a late visit to England.

‘A fascinating subject,’ said old Cecrops to Mr. Phœbus, ‘but not a very original one.’

‘The originality of a subject is in its treatment,’ was the reply.

The theme, in the present instance, was certainly not conventionally treated. When

the curtain was withdrawn, they beheld a figure of life-like size, exhibiting in undisguised completeness the perfection of the female form, and yet the painter had so skilfully availed himself of the shadowy and mystic hour and of some gauze-like drapery, which veiled without concealing his design, that the chastest eye might gaze on his heroine with impunity. The splendour of her upstretched arms held high the beacon light, which threw a glare upon the sublime anxiety of her countenance, while all the tumult of the Hellespont, the waves, the scudding sky, the opposite shore revealed by a blood-red flash, were touched by the hand of a master who had never failed.

The applause was a genuine verdict, and the company after a time began to disperse about the house and gardens. A small circle remained, and passing the silken rope, approached and narrowly scrutinised the picture. Among these were Theodora and Lothair, the chief patron of British art, an R.A. or two, Clorinda, and Lady Beatrice.

Mr. Phœbus, who left the studio but had now returned, did not disturb them. After awhile he approached the group. His air was elate, and was redeemed only from arrogance by the intellect of his brow. The circle started a little as they heard his voice, for they had been unaware of his presence.

‘To-morrow,’ he said, ‘the critics will commence. You know who the critics are? The men who have failed in literature and art.’

## CHAPTER V.

THE lodge-gate of Belmont was opening as Lothair one morning approached it; a Hansom cab came forth, and in it was a person whose countenance was strongly marked on the memory of Lothair. It was that of his unknown friend at the Fenian meeting. Lothair instantly recognised and cordially saluted him, and his greeting, though hurriedly, was not ungraciously returned; but the vehicle did not stop. Lothair called to the driver to halt, but the driver on the contrary stimulated his steed, and in the winding lane was soon out of sight.

Theodora was not immediately visible. She was neither in her usual apartment nor in her garden; but it was only perhaps because Lothair was so full of his own im-

pressions from his recent encounter at the lodge, that he did not observe that the demeanour of Mrs. Campian when she appeared was hardly marked by her habitual serenity. She entered the room hurriedly and spoke with quickness.

‘Pray,’ exclaimed Lothair, rather eagerly, ‘do tell me the name of the gentleman who has just called here.’

Theodora changed colour, looked distressed, and was silent; unobserved however by Lothair, who, absorbed by his own highly excited curiosity, proceeded to explain why he presumed to press for the information. ‘I am under great obligations to that person; I am not sure I may not say I owe him my life, but certainly an extrication from great danger and very embarrassing danger too. I never saw him but once, and he would not give me his name, and scarcely would accept my thanks. I wanted to stop his cab to-day, but it was impossible. He literally galloped off.’

‘He is a foreigner,’ said Mrs. Campian,



who had recovered herself; 'he was a particular friend of my dear father; and when he visits England, which he does occasionally, he calls to see us.'

'Ah!' said Lothair, 'I hope I shall soon have an opportunity of expressing to him my gratitude.'

'It was so like him not to give his name and to shrink from thanks,' said Mrs. Cam-pian. 'He never enters society, and makes no acquaintances.'

'I am sorry for that,' said Lothair, 'for it is not only that he served me, but I was much taken with him, and felt that he was a person I should like to cultivate.'

'Yes, Captain Bruges is a remarkable man,' said Theodora; 'he is not one to be forgotten.'

'Captain Bruges. That then is his name?'

'He is known by the name of Captain Bruges,' said Theodora, and she hesitated; and then speaking more quickly she added, 'I cannot sanction, I cannot bear, any

deception between you and this roof. Bruges is not his real name, nor is the title he assumes his real rank. He is not to be known, and not to be spoken of. He is one, and one of the most eminent, of the great family of sufferers in this world, but sufferers for a divine cause. I myself have been direly stricken in this struggle. When I remember the departed, it is not always easy to bear the thought. I keep it at the bottom of my heart; but this visit to-day has too terribly revived everything. It is well that you only are here to witness my suffering, but you will not have to witness it again, for we will never again speak of these matters.'

Lothair was much touched: his good heart and his good taste alike dissuaded him from attempting commonplace consolation. He ventured to take her hand and pressed it to his lips. 'Dear lady!' he murmured, and he led her to a seat. 'I fear my foolish tattle has added to pain which I would gladly bear for you.'

They talked about nothings: about a new horse which Colonel Campian had just purchased, and which he wanted to show to Lothair; an old opera revived, but which sounded rather flat; something amusing that somebody had said, and something absurd which somebody had done. And then, when the ruffled feeling had been quite composed, and all had been brought back to the tenor of their usual pleasant life, Lothair said suddenly and rather gaily, 'And now, dearest lady, I have a favour to ask. You know my majority is to be achieved and to be celebrated next month. I hope that yourself and Colonel Campian will honour me by being my guests.'

Theodora did not at all look like a lady who had received a social attention of the most distinguished class. She looked embarrassed, and began to murmur something about Colonel Campian, and their never going into society.

'Colonel Campian is going to Scotland and you are going with him,' said Lothair.

‘I know it, for he told me so, and said he could manage the visit to me, if you approved it, quite well. In fact it will fit in with his Scotch visit.’

‘There was some talk once about Scotland,’ said Theodora, ‘but that was a long time ago. Many things have happened since then. I do not think the Scotch visit is by any means so settled as you think.’

‘But however that may be decided,’ said Lothair, ‘there can be no reason why you should not come to me.’

‘It is presumptuous in me, a foreigner, to speak of such matters,’ said Theodora; ‘but I fancy that, in such celebrations as you contemplate, there is, or there should be, some qualification of blood or family connection for becoming your guests. We should be there quite strangers, and in everybody’s way, checking the local and domestic *abandon* which I should suppose is one of the charms of such meetings.’

‘I have few relations and scarcely a connection,’ said Lothair, rather moodily. ‘I can only ask friends to celebrate my majority, and there are no friends whom I so much regard as those who live at Belmont.’

‘It is very kind of you to say that, and to feel it; and I know that you would not say it, if you did not feel it,’ replied Theodora. ‘But still, I think it would be better that we should come to see you at a time when you are less engaged; perhaps you will take Colonel Campian down some day and give him some shooting.’

‘All I can say is that, if you do not come, it will be the darkest, instead of the brightest, week in my life,’ said Lothair. ‘In short, I feel I could not get through the business; I should be so mortified. I cannot restrain my feelings or arrange my countenance. Unless you come, the whole affair will be a complete failure, and worse than a failure.’

‘Well, I will speak to Colonel Campian

about it,' said Theodora, but with little animation.

'We will both speak to him about it now,' said Lothair, for the Colonel at that moment entered the room and greeted Lothair, as was his custom, cordially.

'We are settling the visit to Muriel,' said Lothair; 'I want to induce Mrs. Campian to come down a day or two before the rest, so that we may have the benefit of her counsel.'

## CHAPTER VI.

MURIEL TOWERS crowned a wooded steep, part of a wild, and winding, and sylvan valley at the bottom of which rushed a foaming stream. On the other side of the castle the scene, though extensive, was not less striking, and was essentially romantic. A vast park spread in all directions beyond the limit of the eye, and with much variety of character—ornate near the mansion, and choicely timbered; in other parts glens and spreading dells, masses of black pines and savage woods; everywhere, sometimes glittering and sometimes sullen, glimpses of the largest natural lake that inland England boasts, MURIEL MERE, and in the extreme distance moors, and the first crest of mountains. The park, too, was full of life, for there were not only herds of red and

fallow deer, but, in its more secret haunts, wandered a race of wild cattle, extremely savage, white and dove-coloured, and said to be of the time of the Romans.

It was not without emotion that Lothair beheld the chief seat of his race. It was not the first time he had visited it. He had a clear and painful recollection of a brief, hurried, unkind glimpse caught of it in his very earliest boyhood. His uncle had taken him there by some inconvenient cross-railroad, to avail themselves of which they had risen in the dark on a March morning, and in an east wind. When they arrived at their station they had hired an open fly drawn by a single horse, and when they had thus at last reached the uninhabited Towers, they entered by the offices where Lothair was placed in the steward's room, by a smoky fire, given something to eat, and told that he might walk about and amuse himself, provided he did not go out of sight of the castle, while his uncle and the steward mounted their horses and rode



over the estate; leaving Lothair for hours without companions, and returning just in time, in a shivering twilight, to clutch him up, as it were, by the nape of the neck, twist him back again into the one-horse fly, and regain the railroad; his uncle praising himself the whole time for the satisfactory and business-like manner in which he had planned and completed the expedition.

What a contrast to present circumstances! Although Lothair had wished, and thought he had secured, that his arrival at Muriel should be quite private and even unknown, and that all ceremonies and celebrations should be postponed for a few days, during which he hoped to become a little more familiar with his home, the secret could not be kept, and the county would not tolerate this reserve. He was met at the station by five hundred horsemen all well mounted, and some of them gentlemen of high degree, who insisted upon accompanying him to his gates. His carriage passed under triumphal arches, and

choirs of enthusiastic children, waving parochial banners, hymned his auspicious approach.

At the park-gates his cavalcade quitted him with that delicacy of feeling which always distinguishes Englishmen, however rough their habit. As their attendance was self-invited, they would not intrude upon his home.

‘Your Lordship will have enough to do to-day without being troubled with us,’ said their leader as he shook hands with Lothair.

But Lothair would not part with them thus. With the inspiring recollection of his speech at the Fenian meeting, Lothair was not afraid of rising in his barouche and addressing them. What he said was said very well, and it was addressed to a people who, though the shyest in the world, have a passion for public speaking, than which no achievement more tests reserve. It was something to be a great peer and a great proprietor, and to be young and

singularly well-favoured; but to be able to make a speech, and such a good one, such cordial words in so strong and musical a voice—all felt at once they were in the presence of the natural leader of the county. The enthusiasm of the hunting-field burst forth. They gave him three ringing cheers, and jostled their horses forward that they might grasp his hand.

The park-gates were open and the postilions dashed along through scenes of loveliness on which Lothair would fain have lingered, but he consoled himself with the recollection that he should probably have an opportunity of seeing them again. Sometimes his carriage seemed in the heart of an ancient forest; sometimes the deer, startled at his approach, were scudding over expanding lawns; then his course wound by the margin of a sinuous lake with green islands and golden gondolas; and then, after advancing through stately avenues, he arrived at mighty gates of wondrous workmanship, that once had been the boast

of a celebrated convent on the Danube, but which, in the days of revolutions, had reached England, and had been obtained by the grandfather of Lothair to guard the choice demesne that was the vicinage of his castle.

When we remember that Lothair, notwithstanding his rank and vast wealth, had never, from the nature of things, been the master of an establishment, it must be admitted that the present occasion was a little trying for his nerves. The whole household of the Towers were arrayed and arranged in groups on the steps of the chief entrance. The steward of the estate, who had been one of the cavalcade, had galloped on before, and he was of course the leading spirit, and extended his arm to his Lord as Lothair descended from his carriage. The house-steward, the chief butler, the head-gardener, the chief of the kitchen, the head-keeper, the head-forester, and grooms of the stud and of the chambers, formed one group behind the housekeeper, a grave and

distinguished-looking female, who curtseyed like the old court; half a dozen powdered gentlemen, glowing in crimson liveries, indicated the presence of my Lord's footmen; while the rest of the household, considerable in numbers, were arranged in two groups, according to their sex, and at a respectful distance.

What struck Lothair—who was always thinking, and who had no inconsiderable fund of humour in his sweet and innocent nature—was the wonderful circumstance that, after so long an interval of neglect and abeyance, he should find himself the master of so complete and consummate a household.

‘Castles and parks,’ he thought, ‘I had a right to count on, and, perhaps, even pictures, but how I came to possess such a work of art as my groom of the chambers, who seems as respectfully haughty and as calmly graceful as if he were at Brentham itself, and whose coat must have been made in Saville Row, quite bewilders me.’

But Lothair, though he appreciated Putney Giles, had not yet formed a full conception of the resource and all accomplished providence of that wondrous man, acting under the inspiration of the consummate Apollonia.

Passing through the entrance hall, a lofty chamber though otherwise of moderate dimensions, Lothair was ushered into his armoury, a gallery two hundred feet long, with suits of complete mail ranged on each side, and the walls otherwise covered with rare and curious weapons. It was impossible, even for the master of this collection, to suppress the delight and the surprise with which he beheld the scene. We must remember, in his excuse, that he beheld it for the first time.

The armoury led to a large and lofty octagonal chamber, highly decorated, in the centre of which was the tomb of Lothair's grandfather. He had raised it in his lifetime. The tomb was of alabaster surrounded by a railing of pure gold, and

crowned with a recumbent figure of the deceased in his coronet—a fanciful man, who lived in solitude, building castles and making gardens.

What charmed Lothair most as he proceeded were the number of courts and quadrangles in the castle, all of bright and fantastic architecture, and each of which was a garden, glowing with brilliant colours, and gay with the voice of fountains or the forms of gorgeous birds. Our young friend did not soon weary in his progress; even the suggestions of the steward, that his Lordship's luncheon was at command, did not restrain him. Ball-rooms, and baronial halls, and long libraries with curiously stained windows, and suites of dazzling saloons where he beheld the original portraits of his parents of which he had miniatures—he saw them all, and was pleased, and interested. But what most struck and even astonished him was the habitable air which pervaded the whole of this enormous structure; too rare even when fami-

lies habitually reside in such dwellings; but almost inconceivable, when it was to be remembered that more than a generation had passed without a human being living in these splendid chambers, scarcely a human word being spoken in them. There was not a refinement of modern furniture that was wanting; even the tables were covered with the choicest publications of the day.

‘ Mr. Putney Giles proposes to arrive here to-morrow,’ said the steward. ‘ He thought your Lordship would like to be a day or two alone.’

‘ He is the most sensible man I know,’ said Lothair; ‘ he always does the right thing. I think I will have my luncheon now, Mr. Harvey, and I will go over the cellars to-morrow.’



## CHAPTER VII.

YES; Lothair wished to be alone. He had naturally a love of solitude, but the events of the last few hours lent an additional inducement to meditation. He was impressed in a manner and degree not before experienced with the greatness of his inheritance. His worldly position, until to-day, had been an abstraction. After all he had only been one of a crowd, which he resembled. But the sight of this proud and abounding territory, and the unexpected encounter with his neighbours, brought to him a sense of power and of responsibility. He shrank from neither. The world seemed opening to him with all its delights, and with him duty was one. He was also sensible of the beautiful, and the surrounding forms of nature and art

charmed him. Let us not forget that extreme youth and perfect health were ingredients not wanting in the spell anymore than power or wealth. Was it then complete? Not without the influence of woman.

To that gentle, yet mystical sway the spirit of Lothair had yielded. What was the precise character of his feelings to Theodora—what were his hopes, or views—he had hitherto had neither the time nor the inclination to make certain. The present was so delightful, and the enjoyment of her society had been so constant and complete, that he had ever driven the future from his consideration. Had the conduct of Theodora been different, had she deigned to practise on his affections, appealed to his sensibility, stimulated or piqued his vanity, it might have been otherwise. In the distraction of his heart, or the disturbance of his temper, he might have arrived at conclusions, and even expressed them, incompatible with the exquisite and even sublime friendship, which

had so strangely and beautifully arisen, like a palace in a dream, and absorbed his being. Although their acquaintance could hardly be numbered by months, there was no living person of whom he had seen so much, or to whom he had opened his heart and mind with such profuse ingenuousness. Nor on her part, though apparently shrinking from egotism, had there ever been any intellectual reserve. On the contrary, although never authoritative, and even when touching on her convictions, suggesting rather than dictating them, Lothair could not but feel that during the happy period he had passed in her society, not only his taste had refined but his mind had considerably opened; his views had become larger, his sympathies had expanded; he considered with charity things and even persons from whom a year ago he would have recoiled with alarm or aversion.

The time during which Theodora had been his companion was the happiest period of his life. It was more than that;

he could conceive no felicity greater, and all that he desired was that it should endure. Since they first met, scarcely four and twenty hours had passed without his being in her presence; and now, notwithstanding the novelty and the variety of the objects around him, and the vast, and urgent, and personal interest, which they involved, he felt a want which meeting her, or the daily prospect of meeting her, could alone supply. Her voice lingered in his ear; he gazed upon a countenance invisible to others; and he scarcely saw or did anything without almost unconsciously associating with it her opinion or approbation.

Well, then, the spell was complete. The fitfulness or melancholy which so often are the doom of youth, however otherwise favoured, who do not love, were not the condition, capricious or desponding, of Lothair. In him combined all the accidents and feelings which enchant existence.

He had been rambling in the solitudes of his park, and had thrown himself on the

green shadow of a stately tree, his cheek resting on his arm, and lost in reverie amid the deep and sultry silence. Wealthy and young, noble and full of noble thoughts, with the inspiration of health, surrounded by the beautiful and his heart softened by feelings as exquisite, Lothair, nevertheless, could not refrain from pondering over the mystery of that life which seemed destined to bring to him only delight.

‘Life would be perfect,’ he at length exclaimed, ‘if it would only last.’ But it will not last; and what then? He could not reconcile interest in this life with the conviction of another, and an eternal one. It seemed to him that, with such a conviction, man could have only one thought and one occupation—the future, and preparation for it. With such a conviction, what they called reality appeared to him more vain and nebulous than the scenes and sights of sleep. And he had that conviction; at least he had it once. Had he it now? Yes; he had it now, but modified perhaps;

in detail. He was not so confident as he was a few months ago, that he could be ushered by a Jesuit from his deathbed to the society of St. Michael and all the Angels. There might be long processes of initiation—intermediate states of higher probation and refinement. There might be a horrible and apathetic pause. When millions of ages appeared to be necessary to mature the crust of a rather insignificant planet, it might be presumption in man to assume that his soul, though immortal, was to reach its final destination, regardless of all the influences of space and time.

And the philosophers and distinguished men of science with whom of late he had frequently enjoyed the opportunity of becoming acquainted, what were their views? They differed among themselves: did any of them agree with him? How they accounted for everything except the only point on which man requires revelation! Chance, necessity, atomic theories, nebular hypotheses, developement, evolution, the

origin of worlds, human ancestry—here were high topics on none of which was there lack of argument; and, in a certain sense, of evidence; and what then? There must be design. The reasoning and the research of all philosophy could not be valid against that conviction. If there were no design, why, it would all be nonsense; and he could not believe in nonsense. And if there were design, there must be intelligence; and if intelligence, pure intelligence; and pure intelligence was inconsistent with any disposition but perfect good. But between the all-wise and the all-benevolent and man, according to the new philosophers, no relations were to be any longer acknowledged. They renounce in despair the possibility of bringing man into connexion with that First Cause which they can neither explain nor deny. But man requires that there shall be direct relations between the created and the Creator; and that in those relations he should find a solution of the perplexities of existence. The brain that

teems with illimitable thought, will never recognise as his creator any power of nature, however irresistible, that is not gifted with consciousness. Atheism may be consistent with fine taste, and fine taste under certain conditions may for a time regulate a polished society; but ethics with atheism are impossible; and without ethics no human order can be strong or permanent.

The Church comes forward, and, without equivocation, offers to establish direct relations between God and man. Philosophy denies its title, and disputes its power. Why? Because they are founded on the supernatural. What is the supernatural? Can there be anything more miraculous than the existence of man and the world?—anything more literally supernatural than the origin of things? The Church explains what no one else pretends to explain, and which, everyone agrees, it is of first moment should be made clear.

The clouds of a summer eve were glowing in the creative and flickering blaze of



the vanished sun, that had passed like a monarch from the admiring sight, yet left his pomp behind. The golden and amber vapours fell into forms that to the eye of the musing Lothair depicted the objects of his frequent meditation. There seemed to rise in the horizon the dome and campaniles and lofty aisles of some celestial fane, such as he had often more than dreamed of raising to the revealed author of life and death. Altars arose and sacred shrines, and delicate chantries and fretted spires; now the flashing phantom of heavenly choirs, and then the dim response of cowed and earthly cenobites :

These are black Vesper's pageants !

## CHAPTER VIII.

LOTHAIR was quite glad to see Mr. Putney Giles. That gentleman indeed was an universal favourite. He was intelligent, acquainted with everything except theology and metaphysics, liked to oblige, a little to patronise, never made difficulties, and always overcame them. His bright blue eye, open forehead, and sunny face indicated a man full of resource, and with a temper of natural sweetness.

The lawyer and his noble client had a great deal of business to transact. Lothair was to know his position in detail preparatory to releasing his guardians from their responsibilities, and assuming the management of his own affairs. Mr. Putney Giles was a first-rate man of business. With all his pleasant, easy manner he was

precise and methodical, and was not content that his client should be less master of his own affairs than his lawyer. The mornings passed over a table covered with despatch-boxes and piles of ticketed and banded papers, and then they looked after the workmen who were preparing for the impending festivals, or rode over the estate.

‘That is our weak point,’ said Mr. Putney Giles, pointing to a distant part of the valley. ‘We ought to have both sides of the valley. Your Lordship will have to consider whether you can devote the 200,000*l.* of the second and extinct trust to a better purpose than in obtaining that estate.’

Lothair had always destined that particular sum for the cathedral, the raising of which was to have been the first achievement of his majority; but he did not reply.

In a few days the guests began to arrive, but gradually. The Duke and Duchess and Lady Corisande came the first, and were one day alone with Lothair, for Mr.

Putney Giles had departed to fetch Apollonia.

Lothair was unaffectedly gratified at not only receiving his friends at his own castle, but under these circumstances of intimacy. They had been the first persons who had been kind to him, and he really loved the whole family. They arrived rather late, but he would show them to their rooms—and they were choice ones—himself, and then they dined together in the small green dining-room. Nothing could be more graceful or more cordial than the whole affair. The Duchess seemed to beam with affectionate pleasure as Lothair fulfilled his duties as their host; the Duke praised the claret, and he seldom praised anything; while Lady Corisande only regretted that the impending twilight had prevented her from seeing the beautiful country, and expressed lively interest in the morrow's inspection of the castle and domain. Sometimes her eyes met those of Lothair, and she was so happy that she unconsciously smiled.

‘And to-morrow,’ said Lothair, ‘I am delighted to say, we shall have to ourselves; at least all the morning. We will see the castle first, and then, after luncheon, we will drive about everywhere.’

‘Everywhere,’ said Corisande.

‘It was very nice your asking us first, and alone,’ said the Duchess.

‘It was very nice in your coming, dear Duchess,’ said Lothair, ‘and most kind—as you ever are to me.’

‘Duke of Brecon is coming to you on Thursday,’ said the Duke; ‘he told me so at White’s.’

‘Perhaps you would like to know, Duchess, whom you are going to meet,’ said Lothair.

‘I should much like to hear. Pray tell us.’

‘It is a rather formidable array,’ said Lothair, and he took out a paper. ‘First, there are all the notables of the county. I do not know any of them personally, so I

wrote to each of them a letter, as well as sending them a formal invitation. I thought that was right.'

'Quite right,' said the Duchess. 'Nothing could be more proper.'

'Well, the first person, of course, is the Lord Lieutenant. He is coming.'

'By the bye, let me see, who is your lord lieutenant?' said the Duke.

'Lord Agramont.'

'To be sure. I was at college with him, a very good fellow; but I have never met him since, except once at Boodle's; and I never saw a man so red and grey, and I remember him such a good-looking fellow! He must have lived immensely in the country, and never thought of his person,' said the Duke in a tone of pity, and playing with his moustache.

'Is there a Lady Agramont?' enquired the Duchess.

'Oh yes! and she also honours me with her presence,' said Lothair.

'And who was Lady Agramont?'

‘Oh! his cousin,’ said the Duke. ‘The Agramonts always marry their cousins. His father did the same thing. They are so shy. It is a family that never was in society, and never will be. I was at Agramont Castle once when I was at college, and I never shall forget it. We used to sit down forty or fifty every day to dinner, entirely maiden aunts and clergymen, and that sort of thing. However, I shall be truly glad to see Agramont again, for, notwithstanding all these disadvantages, he is a thoroughly good fellow.’

‘Then there is the High Sheriff,’ continued Lothair; ‘and both the county members and their wives; and Mrs. High Sheriff too. I believe there is some tremendous question respecting the precedence of this lady. There is no doubt that, in the county, the High Sheriff takes precedence of everyone, even of the Lord Lieutenant; but how about his wife? Perhaps your Grace could aid me? Mr. Putney Giles said he would write about it to the Heralds’ College.’

‘I should give her the benefit of any doubt,’ said the Duchess.

‘And then our Bishop is coming,’ said Lothair.

‘Oh! I am so glad you have asked the Bishop,’ said Lady Corisande.

‘There could be no doubt about it,’ said Lothair.

‘I do not know how his Lordship will get on with one of my guardians, the Cardinal; but his Eminence is not here in a priestly character; and, as for that, there is less chance of his differing with the Cardinal than with my other guardian, Lord Culloden, who is a member of the Free Kirk.’

‘Is Lord Culloden coming?’ said the Duchess.

‘Yes, and with two daughters, Flora and Grizell. I remember my cousins, good-natured little girls, but Mr. Putney Giles tells me that the shortest is six feet high.’

‘I think we shall have a very amusing party,’ said the Duchess.

‘You know all the others,’ said Lothair.

‘No, by the bye, there is the Dean of my



college coming, and Monsignore Catesby, a great friend of the St. Jeromes.'

Lady Corisande looked grave.

'The St. Jeromes will be here to-morrow,' continued Lothair, 'and the Montairys and the St. Aldegondes. I have half an idea that Bertram and Carisbrooke and Hugo Bohun will be here to-night—Duke of Brecon on Thursday; and that, I think, is all, except an American lady and gentleman, whom I think you will like—great friends of mine; I knew them this year at Oxford, and they were very kind to me. He is a man of considerable fortune; they have lived at Paris a good deal.'

'I have known Americans who lived at Paris,' said the Duke; 'very good sort of people, and no end of money some of them.'

'I believe Colonel Campian has large estates in the South,' said Lothair; 'but, though really I have no right to speak of his affairs, he must have suffered very much.'

‘Well, he has the consolation of suffering in a good cause,’ said the Duke. ‘I shall be happy to make his acquaintance. I look upon an American gentleman with large estates in the South as a real aristocrat; and whether he gets his rents, or whatever his returns may be, or not, I should always treat him with respect.’

‘I have heard the American women are very pretty,’ said Lady Corisande.

‘Mrs. Campian is very distinguished,’ said Lothair; ‘but I think she was an Italian.’

‘They promise to be an interesting addition to our party,’ said the Duchess, and she rose.

## CHAPTER IX.

THERE never was anything so successful as the arrangements of the next day. After breakfast they inspected the castle, and in the easiest manner, without form and without hurry, resting occasionally in a gallery or a saloon, never examining a cabinet, and only looking at a picture now and then. Generally speaking, nothing is more fatiguing than the survey of a great house, but this enterprise was conducted with so much tact and consideration, and much which they had to see was so beautiful and novel, that every one was interested, and remained quite fresh for their subsequent exertions. ‘And then the Duke is so much amused,’ said the Duchess to her daughter, delighted at the unusual excite-

ment of the handsome, but somewhat too serene, partner of her life.

After luncheon they visited the gardens, which had been formed in a sylvan valley enclosed with gilded gates. The creator of this paradise had been favoured by nature, and had availed himself of this opportunity. The contrast between the parterres blazing with colour and the sylvan background, the undulating paths over romantic heights, the fanes and the fountains, the glittering statues, and the Babylonian terraces, formed a whole much of which was beautiful, and all of which was striking and singular.

‘Perhaps too many temples,’ said Lothair, ‘but this ancestor of mine had some imagination.’

A carriage met them on the other side of the valley, and then they soon entered the park.

‘I am almost as much a stranger here as yourself, dear Duchess,’ said Lothair; ‘but

I have seen some parts which I think will please you.' And they commenced a drive of varying, but unceasing, beauty.

'I hope I shall see the wild cattle,' said Lady Corisande.

Lady Corisande saw the wild cattle, and many other things which gratified and charmed her. It was a long drive, even of hours, and yet no one was for a moment wearied.

'What a delightful day!' Lady Corisande exclaimed in her mother's dressing-room. 'I have never seen any place so beautiful.'

'I agree with you,' said the Duchess, 'but what pleases me most are his manners. They were always kind and natural, but they are so polished—so exactly what they ought to be; and he always says the right thing. I never knew anyone who had so matured.'

'Yes; it is very little more than a year since he came to us at Brentham,' said Lady Corisande thoughtfully. 'Certainly

he has greatly changed. I remember he could hardly open his lips; and now I think him very agreeable.'

'He is more than that,' said the Duchess, 'he is interesting.'

'Yes,' said Lady Corisande; 'he is interesting.'

'What delights me,' said the Duchess, 'is to see his enjoyment of his position. He seems to take such an interest in everything. It makes me happy to see him so happy.'

'Well, I hardly know,' said Lady Corisande, 'about that. There is something occasionally about his expression which I should hardly describe as indicative of happiness or content. It would be ungrateful to describe one as *distract*, who seems to watch all one wants, and hangs on every word; and yet—especially as we returned, and when we were all of us a little silent—there was a remarkable abstraction about him; I caught it once or twice before, earlier in the day;

his mind seemed in another place, and anxiously.'

'He has a great deal to think of,' said the Duchess.

'I fear it is that dreadful Monsignore Catesby,' said Lady Corisande with a sigh.

## CHAPTER X.

THE arrival of the guests was arranged with judgment. The personal friends came first; the formal visitors were invited only for the day before the public ceremonies commenced. No more dinners in small green dining-rooms. While the Duchess was dressing, Bertha St. Aldegonde and Victoria Montairy, who had just arrived, came in to give her a rapid embrace while their own toilettes were unpacking.

‘Granville has come, mamma; I did not think that he would till the last moment. He said he was so afraid of being bored. There is a large party by this train; the St. Jeromes, Bertram, Mr. Bohun, Lord Carisbrooke, and some others we do not know.’



The Cardinal had been expected to-day, but he had telegraphed that his arrival must be postponed in consequence of business until the morrow, which day had been previously fixed for the arrival of his fellow guardian and trustee, the Earl of Culloden, and his daughters, the Ladies Flora and Grizell Falkirk. Monsignore Catesby had, however, arrived by this train, and the persons 'whom they did not know,' the Campians.

Lothair waited on Colonel Campian immediately and welcomed him, but he did not see Theodora. Still he had enquired after her, and left her a message, and hoped that she would take some tea; and thus, as he flattered himself, broken a little the strangeness of their meeting under his roof; but, notwithstanding all this, when she really entered the drawing-room he was seized with such a palpitation of the heart that for a moment he thought he should be unequal to the situation. But the serenity of Theodora

re-assured him. The Campians came in late, and all eyes were upon them. Lothair presented Theodora to the Duchess, who being prepared for the occasion, said exactly the right thing in the best manner, and invited Mrs. Campian to sit by her, and then Theodora being launched, Lothair whispered something to the Duke, who nodded, and the Colonel was introduced to his Grace. The Duke, always polite but generally cold, was more than courteous; he was cordial; he seemed to enjoy the opportunity of expressing his high consideration for a gentleman of the Southern States.

So the first step was over; Lothair recovered himself; the palpitation subsided; and the world still went on. The Campians had made a good start, and the favourable impression hourly increased. At dinner Theodora sat between Lord St. Jerome and Bertram, and talked more to the middle-aged peer than to the distinguished youth, who would willingly

have engrossed her attention. All mothers admire such discretion, especially in a young and beautiful married woman, so the verdict of the evening among the great ladies was, that Theodora was distinguished, and that all she said or did was in good taste. On the plea of her being a foreigner, she was at once admitted into a certain degree of social intimacy. Had she had the misfortune of being native-born and had flirted with Bertram, she would probably, particularly with so much beauty, have been looked upon as 'a horrid woman,' and have been relegated for amusement, during her visit, to the attentions of the dark sex. But, strange to say, the social success of Colonel Campian was not less eminent than that of his distinguished wife. The character which the Duke gave of him commanded universal sympathy. 'You know he is a gentleman,' said the Duke; 'he is not a Yankee. People make the greatest mistakes about these things. He is a gentleman of the South; they have no property but land; and I am told

his territory was immense. He always lived at Paris and in the highest style, disgusted of course with his own country. It is not unlikely he may have lost his estates now; but that makes no difference to me. I shall treat him and all Southern gentlemen, as our fathers treated the emigrant nobility of France.'

'Hugo,' said St. Aldegonde to Mr. Bohun, 'I wish you would tell Bertha to come to me. I want her. She is talking to a lot of women at the other end of the room, and, if I go to her, I am afraid they will get hold of me.'

The future Duchess, who lived only to humour her lord, was at his side in an instant. 'You wanted me, Granville?'

'Yes; you know I was afraid, Bertha, I should be bored here. I am not bored. I like this American fellow. He understands the only two subjects which interest me; horses and tobacco.'

'I am charmed, Granville, that you are not bored; I told mamma that you were very much afraid you would be.'

‘Yes; but I tell you what, Bertha, I cannot stand any of the ceremonies. I shall go before they begin. Why cannot Lothair be content with receiving his friends in a quiet way? It is all humbug about the county. If he wants to do something for the county, he can build a wing to the infirmary, or something of that sort, and not bore us with speeches and fireworks. It is a sort of thing I cannot stand.’

‘And you shall not, dear Granville. The moment you are bored, you shall go. Only you are not bored at present.’

‘Not at present; but I expected to be.’

‘Yes; so I told mamma; but that makes the present more delightful.’

The St. Jeromes were going to Italy and immediately. Their departure had only been postponed in order that they might be present at the majority of Lothair. Miss Arundel had at length succeeded in her great object. They were to pass the winter at Rome. Lord St. Jerome was

quite pleased at having made the acquaintance at dinner of a Roman lady, who spoke English so perfectly ; and Lady St. Jerome, who in consequence fastened upon Theodora, was getting into ecstasies, which would have been embarrassing had not her new acquaintance skilfully checked her.

‘ We must be satisfied that we both admire Rome,’ said Mrs. Campian, ‘ though we admire it for different reasons. Although a Roman, I am not a Roman Catholic ; and Colonel Campian’s views on Italian affairs generally would, I fear, not entirely agree with Lord St. Jerome’s.’

‘ Naturally,’ said Lady St. Jerome gracefully dropping the subject, and remembering that Colonel Campian was a citizen of the United States, which accounted in her apprehension for his peculiar opinions.

Lothair, who had been watching his opportunity the whole evening, approached Theodora. He meant to have expressed his hope that she was not wearied by her journey, but instead of that he said, ‘ Your

presence here makes me inexpressibly happy.'

'I think everybody seems happy to be your guest,' she replied, parrying, as was her custom, with a slight kind smile, and a low, sweet, unembarrassed voice, any personal allusion from Lothair of unusual energy or ardour.

'I wanted to meet you at the station to-day,' he continued, 'but there were so many people coming, that——' and he hesitated.

'It would really have been more embarrassing to us than to yourself,' she said. 'Nothing could be better than all the arrangements.'

'I sent my own brougham for you,' said Lothair. 'I hope there was no mistake about it.'

'None: your servant gave us your kind message; and as for the carriage it was too delightful. Colonel Campian was so pleased with it, that he has promised to give me one, with your permission, exactly the same.'

‘I wish you would accept the one you used to-day.’

‘You are too magnificent; you really must try to forget, with us, that you are the lord of Muriel Towers. But I will willingly use your carriages as much as you please, for I caught glimpses of beauty to-day in our progress from the station that made me anxious to explore your delightful domain.’

There was a slight burst of merriment from a distant part of the room, and everybody looked around. Colonel Campian had been telling a story to a group formed of the Duke, St. Aldegonde, and Mr. Bohun.

‘Best story I ever heard in my life,’ exclaimed St. Aldegonde, who prided himself when he did laugh, which was rare, on laughing loud. But even the Duke tittered, and Hugo Bohun smiled.

‘I am glad to see the Colonel get on so well with everyone,’ said Lothair; ‘I was afraid he might have been bored.’

‘He does not know what that means,’



said Theodora; 'and he is so natural and so sweet-tempered, and so intelligent, that it seems to me he always is popular.'

'Do you think that will be a match?' said Monsignore Catesby to Miss Arundel.

'Well, I rather believe in the Duke of Brecon,' she replied. They were referring to Lord Carisbrooke who appeared to be devoted to Lady Corisande. 'Do you admire the American lady?'

'Who is an Italian, they tell me, though she does not look like one. What do you think of her?' said the Monsignore, evading, as was his custom, a direct reply.

'Well, I think she is very distinguished: unusual. I wonder where our host became acquainted with them? Do you know?'

'Not yet: but I dare say Mr. Bohun can tell us;' and he addressed that gentleman accordingly as he was passing by.

'Not the most remote idea,' said Mr. Bohun. 'You know the Colonel is not a Yankee; he is a tremendous swell. The Duke says with more land than he has.'

‘He seems an agreeable person,’ said Miss Arundel.

‘Well, he tells anecdotes; he has just been telling one; Granville likes anecdotes; they amuse him, and he likes to be amused: that is all he cares about. I hate anecdotes, and I always get away when conversation falls into, what Pinto calls, its anecdotage.’

‘You do not like to be amused?’

‘Not too much; I like to be interested.’

‘Well,’ said Miss Arundel, ‘so long as a person can talk agreeably, I am satisfied. I think to talk well a rare gift; quite as rare as singing; and yet you expect everyone to be able to talk, and very few to be able to sing.’

‘There are amusing people who do not interest,’ said the Monsignore, ‘and interesting people who do not amuse. What I like is an agreeable person.’

‘My idea of an agreeable person,’ said Hugo Bohun, ‘is a person who agrees with me.’

‘ Talking of singing, something is going to happen,’ said Miss Arundel.

A note was heard ; a celebrated professor had entered the room and was seated at the piano which he had just touched. There was a general and unconscious hush, and the countenance of Lord St. Aldegonde wore a rueful expression. But affairs turned out better than could be anticipated. A young and pretty girl, dressed in white, with a gigantic sash of dazzling beauty, played upon the violin with a grace, and sentiment, and marvellous skill, and passionate expression, worthy of St. Cecilia. She was a Hungarian lady, and this was her English début. Everybody praised her, and everybody was pleased ; and Lord St. Aldegonde, instead of being bored, took a wondrous rose out of his buttonhole and presented it to her.

The performance only lasted half an hour, and then the ladies began to think of their bowers. Lady St. Aldegonde, before she

quitted the room, was in earnest conversation with her lord.

‘I have arranged all that you wished, Granville,’ she said, speaking rapidly and holding a candlestick. ‘We are to see the castle to-morrow, and the gardens and the parks and everything else, but you are not to be bored at all, and not to lose your shooting. The moors are sixteen miles off, but our host says, with an omnibus and a good team—and he will give you a first-rate one—you can do it in an hour and ten minutes, certainly an hour and a quarter; and you are to make your own party in the smoking-room to-night, and take a capital luncheon with you.’

‘All right: I shall ask the Yankee; and I should like to take that Hungarian girl too, if she would only fiddle to us at luncheon.’

## CHAPTER XI.

NEXT day the Cardinal, with his secretary and his chaplain, arrived. Monsignore Catesby received his Eminence at the station and knelt and kissed his hand as he stepped from the carriage. The Monsignore had wonderfully manœuvred that the whole of the household should have been marshalled to receive this Prince of the Church, and perhaps have performed the same ceremony: no religious recognition, he assured them, in the least degree involved, only an act of not unusual respect to a foreign Prince; but considering that the Bishop of the diocese and his suite were that day expected, to say nothing of the Presbyterian guardian probably arriving by the same train, Lothair would not be persuaded to sanction any ceremony whatever.

Lady St. Jerome and Miss Arundel, however, did their best to compensate for this omission with reverences which a posture master might have envied, and certainly would not have surpassed. They seemed to sink into the earth, and then slowly and supernaturally to emerge. The Bishop had been at college with the Cardinal and intimate with him, though they now met for the first time since his secession—a not uninteresting rencounter. The Bishop was high-church, and would not himself have made a bad cardinal, being polished and plausible, well-lettered, yet quite a man of the world. He was fond of society, and justified his taste in this respect by the flattering belief that by his presence he was extending the power of the Church; certainly favouring an ambition which could not be described as being moderate. The Bishop had no abstract prejudice against gentlemen who wore red hats, and under ordinary circumstances would have welcomed his brother churchman with unaffected cor-

diality, not to say sympathy ; but in the present instance, however gracious his mien and honeyed his expressions, he only looked upon the Cardinal as a dangerous rival, intent upon clutching from his fold the most precious of his flock, and he had long looked to this occasion as the one which might decide the spiritual welfare and career of Lothair. The odds were not to be despised. There were two Monsignores in the room besides the Cardinal, but the Bishop was a man of contrivance and resolution, not easily disheartened or defeated. Nor was he without allies. He did not count much on the University don, who was to arrive on the morrow in the shape of the head of an Oxford house, though he was a don of magnitude. This eminent personage had already let Lothair slip from his influence. But the Bishop had a subtle counsellor in his chaplain, who wore as good a cassock as any Monsignore, and he brought with him also a trusty archdeacon in a purple coat, whose

countenance was quite entitled to a place in the *Acta Sanctorum*.

It was amusing to observe the elaborate courtesy and more than Christian kindness which the rival prelates and their official followers extended to each other. But under all this unction on both sides were unceasing observation, and a vigilance that never flagged; and on both sides there was an uneasy but irresistible conviction that they were on the eve of one of the decisive battles of the social world. Lord Culloden also at length appeared with his daughters, Ladies Flora and Grizell. They were quite as tall as Mr. Putney Giles had reported, but very pretty, with radiant complexions, sunny blue eyes, and flaxen locks. Their dimples and white shoulders and small feet and hands were much admired. Mr. Giles also returned with Apollonia, and at length also appeared the rival of Lord Carisbrooke, his Grace of Brecon.

Lothair had passed a happy morning, for he had contrived, without difficulty, to be



the companion of Theodora during the greater part of it. As the Duchess and Lady Corisande had already inspected the castle, they disappeared after breakfast to write letters ; and when the after-luncheon expedition took place, Lothair allotted them to the care of Lord Carisbrooke, and himself became the companion of Lady St. Jerome and Theodora.

Notwithstanding all his efforts in the smoking-room, St. Aldegonde had only been able to induce Colonel Campian to be his companion in the shooting expedition, and the Colonel fell into the lure only through his carelessness and good-nature. He much doubted the discretion of his decision as he listened to Lord St. Aldegonde's reasons for the expedition in their rapid journey to the moors.

‘ I do not suppose,’ he said, ‘ we shall have any good sport ; but when you are in Scotland and come to me, as I hope you will, I will give you something you will like. But it is a great thing to get off

seeing the Towers, and the gardens, and all that sort of thing. Nothing bores me so much as going over a man's house. Besides, we get rid of the women.'

The meeting between the two guardians did not promise to be as pleasant as that between the Bishop and the Cardinal, but the crusty Lord Culloden was scarcely a match for the social dexterity of his Eminence. The Cardinal, crossing the room, with winning ceremony approached and addressed his colleague.

'We can have no more controversies, my Lord, for our reign is over;' and he extended a delicate hand, which the surprised peer touched with a huge finger.

'Yes; it all depends on himself now,' replied Lord Culloden with a grim smile; 'and I hope he will not make a fool of himself.'

'What have you got for us to-night?' enquired Lothair of Mr. Giles, as the gentlemen rose from the dining table.

Mr. Giles said he would consult his wife, but Lothair observing he would himself

undertake that office, when he entered the saloon addressed Apollonia. Nothing could be more skilful than the manner in which Mrs. Giles in this party assumed precisely the position which equally became her and suited her own views; at the same time the somewhat humble friend, but the trusted counsellor, of the Towers, she disarmed envy and conciliated consideration. Never obtrusive, yet always prompt and prepared with unfailing resource, and gifted apparently with universal talents, she soon became the recognised medium by which everything was suggested or arranged; and before eight and forty hours had passed she was described by Duchesses and their daughters as that ‘ dear Mrs. Giles.’

‘ Monsieur Raphael and his sister came down in the train with us,’ said Mrs. Giles to Lothair; ‘ the rest of the troupe will not be here until to-morrow; but they told me they could give you a perfect proverbe if your Lordship would like it; and the Spanish conjuror is here; but I rather think,

from what I gather, that the young ladies would like a dance.'

'I do not much fancy acting the moment these great churchmen have arrived, and with Cardinals and Bishops I would rather not have dances the first night. I almost wish we had kept the Hungarian lady for this evening.'

'Shall I send for her? she is ready.'

'The repetition would be too soon, and would show a great poverty of resources,' said Lothair smiling; 'what we want is some singing.'

'Mardoni ought to have been here to-day,' said Mrs. Giles; 'but he never keeps his engagements.'

'I think our amateur materials are rather rich,' said Lothair.

'There is Mrs. Campian,' said Apollonia in a low voice, but Lothair shook his head.

'But perhaps if others set her the example,' he added after a pause; 'Lady Corisande is first-rate, and all her sisters sing; I will go and consult the Duchess.'

There was soon a stir in the room. Lady St. Aldegonde and her sisters approached the piano at which was seated the eminent professor. A note was heard, and there was silence. The execution was exquisite; and indeed there are few things more dainty than the blended voices of three women. No one seemed to appreciate the performance more than Mrs. Campian, who, greatly attracted by what was taking place, turned a careless ear even to the honeyed sentences of no less a personage than the Lord Bishop.

After an interval, Lady Corisande was handed to the piano by Lothair. She was in fine voice and sang with wonderful effect. Mrs. Campian, who seemed much interested, softly rose and stole to the outward circle of the group which had gathered round the instrument. When the sounds had ceased, amid the general applause her voice of admiration was heard. The Duchess approached her, evidently prompted by the general wish, and expressed her

hope that Mrs. Campian would now favour them. It was not becoming to refuse when others had contributed so freely to the general entertainment, but Theodora was anxious not to place herself in competition with those who had preceded her. Looking over a volume of music she suggested to Lady Corisande a duet in which the peculiarities of their two voices, which in character were quite different, one being a soprano and the other a contralto, might be displayed. And very seldom in a private chamber had anything of so high a class been heard. Not a lip moved except those of the singers, so complete was the fascination, till the conclusion elicited a burst of irresistible applause.

‘In imagination I am throwing endless bouquets,’ said Hugo Bohun.

‘I wish we could induce her to give us a recitation from Alfieri,’ said Mrs. Putney Giles in a whisper to Lady St. Aldegonde. ‘I heard it once: it was the finest thing I ever listened to.’

‘But cannot we?’ said Lady St. Aldegonde.

Apollonia shook her head. ‘She is extremely reserved. I am quite surprised that she sang; but she could not well refuse after your Ladyship and your sisters had been so kind.’

‘But if the Lord of the Towers asks her,’ suggested Lady St. Aldegonde.

‘No, no,’ said Mrs. Giles, ‘that would not do; nor would he. He knows she dislikes it. A word from Colonel Campian and the thing would be settled; but it is rather absurd to invoke the authority of a husband for so light a matter.’

‘I should like so much to hear her,’ said Lady St. Aldegonde. ‘I think I will ask her myself. I will go and speak to mamma.’

There was much whispering and consulting in the room, but unnoticed, as general conversation had now been resumed. The Duchess sent for Lothair and conferred with him; but Lothair seemed to shake his head. Then her Grace rose and approached Colonel Campian, who was talk-

ing to Lord Culloden, and then the Duchess and Lady St. Aldegonde went to Mrs. Campian. Then, after a short time, Lady St. Aldegonde rose and fetched Lothair.

‘ Her Grace tells me,’ said Theodora, ‘ that Colonel Campian wishes me to give a recitation. I cannot believe that such a performance can ever be generally interesting, especially in a foreign language, and I confess that I would rather not exhibit. But I do not like to be churlish when all are so amiable and compliant, and her Grace tells me that it cannot well be postponed, for this is the last quiet night we shall have. What I want is a screen, and I must be a moment alone, before I venture on these enterprises. I require it to create the ideal presence.’

Lothair and Bertram arranged the screen, the Duchess and Lady St. Aldegonde glided about, and tranquilly intimated what was going to occur, so that, without effort, there was in a moment complete silence and general expectation. Almost unnoticed



Mrs. Campian had disappeared, whispering a word as she passed to the eminent conductor, who was still seated at the piano. The company had almost unconsciously grouped themselves in the form of a theatre, the gentlemen generally standing behind the ladies who were seated. There were some bars of solemn music, and then to an audience not less nervous than herself, Theodora came forward as Electra in that beautiful appeal to Clytemnestra, where she veils her mother's guilt even while she intimates her more than terrible suspicion of its existence, and makes one last desperate appeal of pathetic duty in order to save her parent and her fated house :

O amata madre,  
Che fai ? Non credo io, no, che ardente fiamma  
Il cor ti avvampi.

The ineffable grace of her action, simple without redundancy, her exquisite elocution, her deep yet controlled passion, and the magic of a voice thrilling even in a whisper

—this form of Phidias with the genius of Sophocles—entirely enraptured a fastidious audience. When she ceased, there was an outburst of profound and unaffected appreciation; and Lord St. Aldegonde, who had listened in a sort of ecstasy, rushed forward, with a countenance as serious as the theme, to offer his thanks and express his admiration.

And then they gathered round her—all these charming women and some of these admiring men—as she would have resumed her seat, and entreated her once more—only once more—to favour them. She caught the adoring glance of the Lord of the Towers, and her eyes seemed to enquire what she should do. ‘There will be many strangers here to-morrow,’ said Lothair, ‘and next week all the world. This is a delight only for the initiated,’ and he entreated her to gratify them.

‘It shall be Alfieri’s ode to America then,’ said Theodora, ‘if you please.’

‘She is a Roman I believe,’ said Lady

St. Jerome to his Eminence, ‘but not, alas! a child of the Church. Indeed I fear her views generally are advanced,’ and she shook her head.

‘At present,’ said the Cardinal, ‘this roof and this visit may influence her. I should like to see such powers engaged in the cause of God.’

The Cardinal was an entire believer in female influence, and a considerable believer in his influence over females; and he had good cause for his convictions. The catalogue of his proselytes was numerous and distinguished. He had not only converted a duchess and several countesses, but he had gathered into his fold a real Mary Magdalen. In the height of her beauty and her fame, the most distinguished member of the demi-monde had suddenly thrown up her golden whip and jingling reins, and cast herself at the feet of the Cardinal. He had a right, therefore, to be confident; and while his exquisite taste and consummate cultivation rendered

it impossible that he should not have been deeply gratified by the performance of Theodora, he was really the whole time considering the best means by which such charms and powers could be enlisted in the cause of the Church.

After the ladies had retired, the gentlemen talked for a few minutes over the interesting occurrence of the evening.

‘Do you know,’ said the Bishop to the Duke and some surrounding auditors, ‘fine as was the Electra, I preferred the ode to the tragedy. There was a tumult of her brow, especially in the address to Liberty, that was sublime—quite a Mœnad look.’

‘What do you think of it, Carry?’ said St. Aldegonde to Lord Carisbrooke.

‘Brecon says she puts him in mind of Ristori.’

‘She is not in the least like Ristori, or anyone else,’ said St. Aldegonde. ‘I never heard, I never saw anyone like her. I’ll tell you what,—you must take care what you say about her in the smoking-room,

for her husband will be there, and an excellent fellow too. We went together to the moors this morning, and he did not bore me in the least. Only, if I had known as much about his wife as I do now, I would have stayed at home, and passed my morning with the women.'

## CHAPTER XII.

ST. ALDEGONDE loved to preside over the mysteries of the smoking-room. There, enveloped in his Egyptian robe, occasionally blurting out some careless or headstrong paradox to provoke discussion among others, which would amuse himself, rioting in a Rabelaisian anecdote, and listening with critical delight to endless memoirs of horses and prima-donnas, St. Aldegonde was never bored. Sometimes, too, when he could get hold of an eminent traveller, or some individual distinguished for special knowledge, St. Aldegonde would draw him out with skill, himself displaying an acquaintance with the particular topic which often surprised his habitual companions, for St. Aldegonde professed never to read ; but he had no ordinary abilities, and an original

turn of mind and habit of life, which threw him in the way of unusual persons of all classes, from whom he imbibed or extracted a vast variety of queer, always amusing, and not altogether useless, information.

‘Lothair has only one weakness,’ he said to Colonel Campian as the ladies disappeared; ‘he does not smoke. Carry, you will come?’

‘Well, I do not think I shall to-night,’ said Lord Carisbrooke. Lady Corisande, it appears, particularly disapproved of smoking.

‘Hum!’ said St. Aldegonde; ‘Duke of Brecon, I know, will come, and Hugo and Bertram. My brother Montairy would give his ears to come, but is afraid of his wife; and then there is the Monsignore, a most capital fellow, who knows everything.’

There were other gatherings before the midnight bell struck at the Towers which discussed important affairs, though they might not sit so late as the smoking party.

Lady St. Aldegonde had a reception in her room as well as her lord. There the silent observation of the evening found avenging expression in sparkling criticism; and the summer lightning, though it generally blazed with harmless brilliancy, occasionally assumed a more arrowy character. The gentlemen of the smoking-room have it not all their own way quite as much as they think. If, indeed, a new school of Athens were to be pictured, the sages and the students might be represented in exquisite dressing-gowns, with slippers rarer than the lost one of Cinderella, and brandishing beautiful brushes over tresses still more fair. Then is the time when characters are never more finely drawn, or difficult social questions more accurately solved; knowledge without reasoning and truth without logic—the triumph of intuition! But we must not profane the mysteries of *Bona Dea*.

The Archdeacon and the Chaplain had also been in council with the Bishop in his



dressing-room, who, while he dismissed them with his benison, repeated his apparently satisfactory assurance, that something would happen 'the first thing after breakfast.'

Lothair did not smoke, but he did not sleep. He was absorbed by the thought of Theodora. He could not but be conscious, and so far he was pleased by the consciousness, that she was as fascinating to others as to himself. What then? Even with the splendid novelty of his majestic home, and all the excitement of such an incident in his life, and the immediate prospect of their again meeting, he had felt, and even acutely, their separation. Whether it were the admiration of her by others which proved his own just appreciation, or whether it were the unobtrusive display of exquisite accomplishments, which with all their intimacy she had never forced on his notice—whatever the cause, her hold upon his heart and life, powerful as it was before, had strengthened. Lothair

could not conceive existence tolerable without her constant presence; and with her constant presence existence would be rapture. It had come to that. All his musings, all his profound investigation and high resolve, all his sublime speculations on God and man, and life and immortality, and the origin of things, and religious truth, ended in an engrossing state of feeling, which could be denoted in that form and in no other.

What then was his future? It seemed dark and distressing. Her constant presence his only happiness; her constant presence impossible. He seemed on an abyss.

In eight and forty hours or so one of the chief provinces of England would be blazing with the celebration of his legal accession to his high estate. If anyone in the Queen's dominions had to be fixed upon as the most fortunate and happiest of her subjects, it might well be Lothair. If happiness depend on lofty station, his

ancient and hereditary rank was of the highest; if, as there seems no doubt, the chief source of felicity in this country is wealth, his vast possessions and accumulated treasure could not easily be rivalled, while he had a matchless advantage over those who pass, or waste, their grey and withered lives in acquiring millions, in his consummate and healthy youth. He had bright abilities, and a brighter heart. And yet the unknown truth was, that this favoured being, on the eve of this critical event, was pacing his chamber agitated and infinitely disquieted, and struggling with circumstances and feelings over which alike he seemed to have no control, and which seemed to have been evoked without the exercise of his own will, or that of any other person.

‘I do not think I can blame myself,’ he said; ‘and I am sure I cannot blame her. And yet ——’

He opened his window and looked upon the moonlit garden, which filled the fanci-

ful quadrangle. The light of the fountain seemed to fascinate his eye, and the music of its fall soothed him into reverie. The distressful images that had gathered round his heart gradually vanished, and all that remained to him was the reality of his happiness. Her beauty and her grace, the sweet stillness of her searching intellect, and the refined pathos of her disposition only occurred to him, and he dwelt on them with spell-bound joy.

The great clock of the Towers sounded two.

‘Ah!’ said Lothair, ‘I must try to sleep. I have got to see the Bishop to-morrow morning. I wonder what he wants.’

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE Bishop was particularly playful on the morrow at breakfast. Though his face beamed with Christian kindness, there was a twinkle in his eye which seemed not entirely superior to mundane self-complacency, even to a sense of earthly merit. His seraphic raillery elicited sympathetic applause from the ladies, especially from the daughters of the house of Brentham, who laughed occasionally even before his angelic jokes were well launched. His lambent flashes sometimes even played over the Cardinal, whose cerulean armour, nevertheless, remained always unscathed. Monsignore Chidioch, however, who would once unnecessarily rush to the aid of his chief, was tumbled over by the Bishop with relentless gaiety, to the infinite de-

light of Lady Corisande, who only wished it had been that dreadful Monsignore Catesby. But, though less demonstrative, apparently not the least devout, of his Lordship's votaries, were the Lady Flora and the Lady Grizell. These young gentlewomen, though apparently gifted with appetites becoming their ample, but far from graceless, forms, contrived to satisfy all the wants of nature without taking their charmed vision for a moment off the prelate, or losing a word which escaped his consecrated lips. Sometimes even they ventured to smile, and then they looked at their father and sighed. It was evident, notwithstanding their appetites and their splendid complexions, which would have become the Aurora of Guido, that these young ladies had some secret sorrow which required a confidante. Their visit to Muriel Towers was their introduction to society, for the eldest had only just attained sweet seventeen. Young ladies under these circumstances always fall in love, but with

their own sex. Lady Flora and Lady Grizell both fell in love with Lady Corisande, and before the morning had passed away she had become their friend and counsellor, and the object of their devoted adoration. It seems that their secret sorrow had its origin in that mysterious religious sentiment which agitates or affects every class and condition of man, and which creates or destroys states, though philosophers are daily assuring us 'that there is nothing in it.' The daughters of the Earl of Culloden could not stand any longer the Free Kirk, of which their austere parent was a fiery votary. It seems that they had been secretly converted to the Episcopal Church of Scotland by a governess, who pretended to be a daughter of the Covenant, but who was really a niece of the Primus, and, as Lord Culloden acutely observed, when he ignominiously dismissed her, 'a Jesuit in disguise.' From that moment there had been no peace in his house. His handsome and gigantic daugh-

ters, who had hitherto been all meekness, and who had obeyed him as they would a tyrant father of the feudal ages, were resolute, and would not compromise their souls. They humbly expressed their desire to enter a convent, or to become at least sisters of mercy. Lord Culloden raged and raved, and delivered himself of cynical taunts, but to no purpose. The principle that forms free kirks is a strong principle, and takes many forms, which the social Polyphemes, who have only one eye, cannot perceive. In his desperate confusion, he thought that change of scene might be a diversion when things were at the worst, and this was the reason that he had, contrary to his original intention, accepted the invitation of his ward.

Lady Corisande was exactly the guide the girls required. They sate on each side of her, each holding her hand, which they frequently pressed to their lips. As her form was slight, though of perfect grace and symmetry, the contrast between her-



self and her worshippers was rather startling; but her noble brow, full of thought and purpose, the firmness of her chiselled lip, and the rich fire of her glance, vindicated her post as the leading spirit.

They breakfasted in a room which opened on a gallery, and at the other end of the gallery was an apartment similar to the breakfast-room, which was the male morning-room, and where the world could find the newspapers, or join in half an hour's talk over the intended arrangements of the day. When the breakfast-party broke up the Bishop approached Lothair, and looked at him earnestly.

'I am at your Lordship's service,' said Lothair, and they quitted the breakfast-room together. Halfway down the gallery they met Monsignore Catesby, who had in his hand a number, just arrived, of a newspaper which was esteemed an Ultramontane organ. He bowed as he passed them, with an air of some exultation, and the Bishop and himself exchanged significant smiles, which, however, meant different things.

Quitting the gallery, Lothair led the way to his private apartments; and, opening the door, ushered in the Bishop.

Now what was contained in the Ultramontane organ which apparently occasioned so much satisfaction to Monsignore Catesby? A deftly drawn-up announcement of some important arrangements which had been deeply planned. The announcement would be repeated in all the daily papers, which were hourly expected. The world was informed that his Eminence, Cardinal Grandison, now on a visit at Muriel Towers to his ward, Lothair, would celebrate High Mass on the ensuing Sunday in the city which was the episcopal capital of the Bishop's see, and afterwards preach on the present state of the Church of Christ. As the Bishop must be absent from his cathedral that day, and had promised to preach in the chapel at Muriel, there was something dexterous in thus turning his Lordship's flank, and desolating his diocese when he was not present to guard it from the fiery dragon.

It was also remarked that there would be an unusual gathering of the Catholic aristocracy for the occasion. The rate of lodgings in the city had risen in consequence. At the end of the paragraph it was distinctly contradicted that Lothair had entered the Catholic Church. Such a statement was declared to be 'premature,' as his guardian the Cardinal would never sanction his taking such a step until he was the master of his own actions; the general impression left by the whole paragraph being, that the world was not to be astonished if the first step of Lothair, on accomplishing his majority, was to pursue the very course which was now daintily described as premature.

At luncheon the whole party were again assembled. The newspapers had arrived in the interval, and had been digested. Every one was aware of the Popish plot, as Hugo Bohun called it. The Bishop, however, looked serene, and if not as elate as in the morning, calm and content. He sate by the Duchess, and spoke to her in a low

voice and with seriousness. The Monsignor watched every expression.

When the Duchess rose the Bishop accompanied her into the recess of a window, and she said, 'You may depend upon me; I cannot answer for the Duke. It is not the early rising; he always rises early in the country, but he likes to read his letters before he dresses, and that sort of thing. I think you had better speak to Lady Corisande yourself.'

What had taken place at the interview of the Bishop with Lothair, and what had elicited from the Duchess an assurance that the prelate might depend upon her, generally transpired, in consequence of some confidential communications, in the course of the afternoon. It appeared that the Right Rev. Lord had impressed, and successfully, on Lothair the paramount duty of commencing the day of his majority by assisting in an early celebration of the most sacred rite of the Church. This, in the estimation of the Bishop, though he had

not directly alluded to the subject in the interview, but had urged the act on higher grounds, would be a triumphant answer to the insidious and calumnious paragraphs which had circulated during the last six months, and an authentic testimony that Lothair was not going to quit the Church of his fathers.

This announcement, however, produced consternation in the opposite camp. It seemed to more than neutralise the anticipated effect of the programme, and the deftly-conceived paragraph. Monsignore Catesby went about whispering that he feared Lothair was going to overdo it; and considering what he had to go through on Monday, if it were only for considerations of health, an early celebration was inexpedient. He tried the Duchess—about whom he was beginning to hover a good deal—as he fancied she was of an impressionable disposition, and gave some promise of results; but here the ground had been too forcibly preoccupied: then he flew to Lady St. Aldegonde, but he had the morti-

fication of learning from her lips, that she herself contemplated being a communicant at the same time. Lady Corisande had been before him. All the energies of that young lady were put forth in order that Lothair should be countenanced on this solemn occasion. She conveyed to the Bishop before dinner the results of her exertions.

‘You may count on Alberta St. Aldegonde and Victoria Montairy, and, I think, Lord Montairy also, if she presses him, which she has promised to do. Bertram must kneel by his friend at such a time. I think Lord Carisbrooke may: Duke of Brecon, I can say nothing about at present.’

‘Lord St. Aldegonde?’ said the Bishop. Lady Corisande shook her head.

There had been a conclave in the Bishop’s room before dinner, in which the interview of the morning was discussed.

‘It was successful; scarcely satisfactory,’ said the Bishop. ‘He is a very clever fellow, and knows a great deal. They have got hold of him, and he has all the argu-

ments at his fingers' ends. When I came to the point he began to demur; I saw what was passing through his mind, and I said at once — "Your views are high: so are mine: so are those of the Church. It is a sacrifice, undoubtedly, in a certain sense. No sound theologian would maintain the simplicity of the elements; but that does not involve the coarse interpretation of the dark ages."

'Good, good,' said the Archdeacon; 'and what is it your Lordship did not exactly like?'

'He fenced too much; and he said more than once, and in a manner I did not like, that, whatever were his views as to the Church, he thought he could on the whole conscientiously partake of this rite as administered by the Church of England.'

'Everything depends on this celebration,' said the Chaplain; 'after that his doubts and difficulties will dispel.'

'We must do our best that he is well supported,' said the Archdeacon.

‘No fear of that,’ said the Bishop. ‘I have spoken to some of our friends. We may depend on the Duchess and her daughters—all admirable women; and they will do what they can with others. It will be a busy day, but I have expressed my hope that the heads of the household may be able to attend. But the county notables arrive to-day, and I shall make it a point with them, especially the Lord Lieutenant.’

‘It should be known,’ said the Chaplain. ‘I will send a memorandum to the “Guardian.”’

‘And “John Bull,”’ said the Bishop.

The Lord Lieutenant and Lady Agramont, and their daughter, Lady Ida Alice, arrived to-day; and the High Sheriff, a manufacturer, a great liberal who delighted in peers, but whose otherwise perfect felicity to-day was a little marred and lessened by the haunting and restless fear that Lothair was not duly aware that he took precedence of the Lord Lieutenant. Then there were Sir Hamlet Clotworthy, the master of



the hounds, and a capital man of business; and the honourable Lady Clotworthy, a haughty dame who ruled her circle with tremendous airs and graces, but who was a little subdued in the empyrean of Muriel Towers. The other county member, Mr. Ardenne, was a refined gentleman and loved the arts. He had an ancient pedigree, and knew everybody else's, which was not always pleasant. What he most prided himself on was being the hereditary owner of a real deer park—the only one, he asserted, in the county. Other persons had parks which had deer in them, but that was quite a different thing. His wife was a pretty woman, and the inspiring genius of archæological societies, who loved their annual luncheon in her Tudor Halls, and illustrated by their researches the deeds and dwellings of her husband's ancient race.

The clergy of the various parishes on the estate all dined at the Towers to-day, in order to pay their respects to their

Bishop. ‘Lothair’s œcumenical council,’ said Hugo Bohun, as he entered the crowded room, and looked around him with an air of not ungraceful impertinence. Among the clergy was Mr. Smylie, the brother of Apollonia.

A few years ago, Mr. Putney Giles had not unreasonably availed himself of the position which he so usefully and so honourably filled, to recommend this gentleman to the guardians of Lothair to fill a vacant benefice. The Reverend Dionysius Smylie had distinguished himself at Trinity College, Dublin, and had gained a Hebrew scholarship there; after that he had written a work on the Revelations, which clearly settled the long-controverted point whether Rome in the great apocalypse was signified by Babylon. The Bishop shrugged his shoulders when he received Mr. Smylie’s papers, the examining Chaplain sighed, and the Archdeacon groaned. But man is proverbially shortsighted. The doctrine of evolution affords no instances so striking as

those of sacerdotal developement. Placed under the favouring conditions of clime and soil, the real character of the Rev. Dionysius Smylie gradually, but powerfully, developed itself. Where he now ministered, he was attended by acolytes, and incensed by thurifers. The shoulders of a fellow-countryman were alone equal to the burden of the enormous cross which preceded him; while his ecclesiastical wardrobe furnished him with many coloured garments, suited to every season of the year, and every festival of the Church.

At first there was indignation, and rumours or prophecies that we should soon have another case of perversion, and that Mr. Smylie was going over to Rome; but these superficial commentators misapprehended the vigorous vanity of the man. 'Rome may come to me,' said Mr. Smylie, 'and it is perhaps the best thing it could do. This is the real Church without Romish error.'

The Bishop and his reverend staff, who

were at first so much annoyed at the ferment of Mr. Smylie, had now, with respect to him, only one duty, and that was to restrain his exuberant priestliness; but they fulfilled that duty in a kindly and charitable spirit; and when the Rev. Dionysius Smylie was appointed chaplain to Lothair, the Bishop did not shrug his shoulders, the Chaplain did not sigh, nor the Archdeacon groan.

The party was so considerable to-day that they dined in the great hall. When it was announced to Lothair that his Lordship's dinner was served, and he offered his arm to his destined companion, he looked around, and then, in an audible voice, and with a stateliness becoming such an incident, called upon the High Sheriff to lead the Duchess to the table. Although that eminent personage had been thinking of nothing else for days, and during the last half-hour had felt as a man feels, and can only feel, who knows that some public function is momentarily about to fall to his

perilous discharge, he was taken quite aback, changed colour, and lost his head. But the band of Lothair, who were waiting at the door of the apartment to precede the procession to the hall, striking up at this moment 'The Roast Beef of Old England,' reanimated his heart; and following Lothair, and preceding all the other guests down the gallery, and through many chambers, he experienced the proudest moment of a life of struggle, ingenuity, vicissitude, and success.

## CHAPTER XIV.

UNDER all this flowing festivity there was already a current of struggle and party passion. Serious thoughts and some anxiety occupied the minds of several of the guests, amid the variety of proffered dishes and sparkling wines, and the subdued strains of delicate music. This disquietude did not touch Lothair. He was happy to find himself in his ancestral hall, surrounded by many whom he respected, and by some whom he loved. He was an excellent host, which no one can be who does not combine a good heart with high breeding.

Theodora was rather far from him, but he could catch her grave, sweet countenance at an angle of the table, as she bowed her head to Mr. Ardenne, the county

member, who was evidently initiating her in all the mysteries of deer parks. The Cardinal sate near him, winning over, though without apparent effort, the somewhat prejudiced Lady Agramont. His Eminence could converse with more facility than others, for he dined off biscuits and drank only water. Lord Culloden had taken out Lady St. Jerome, who expended on him all the resources of her impassioned tittle-tattle, extracting only grim smiles; and Lady Corisande had fallen to the happy lot of the Duke of Brecon; according to the fine perception of Clare Arundel—and women are very quick in these discoveries—the winning horse. St. Aldegonde had managed to tumble in between Lady Flora and Lady Grizell, and seemed immensely amused.

The Duke enquired of Lothair how many he could dine in his hall.

‘We must dine more than two hundred on Monday,’ he replied.

‘And now, I should think, we have only

a third of that number,' said his Grace, 'It will be a tight fit.'

'Mr. Putney Giles has had a drawing made, and every seat apportioned. We shall just do it.'

'I fear you will have too busy a day on Monday,' said the Cardinal, who had caught up the conversation.

'Well, you know, sir, I do not sit up smoking with Lord St. Aldegonde.'

After dinner, Lady Corisande seated herself by Mrs. Campian. 'You must have thought me very rude,' she said, 'to have left you so suddenly at tea, when the Bishop looked into the room; but he wanted me on a matter of the greatest importance. I must, therefore, ask your pardon. You naturally would not feel on this matter as we all do, or most of us do,' she added with some hesitation; 'being—pardon me—a foreigner, and the question involving national as well as religious feelings;' and then somewhat hurriedly, but with emotion, she detailed to



Theodora all that had occurred respecting the early celebration on Monday, and the opposition it was receiving from the Cardinal and his friends. It was a relief to Lady Corisande thus to express all her feelings on a subject on which she had been brooding the whole day.

‘You mistake,’ said Theodora quietly, when Lady Corisande had finished. ‘I am much interested in what you tell me. I should deplore our friend falling under the influence of the Romish priesthood.’

‘And yet there is danger of it,’ said Lady Corisande, ‘more than danger,’ she added in a low but earnest voice. ‘You do not know what a conspiracy is going on, and has been going on for months to effect this end. I tremble.’

‘That is the last thing I ever do,’ said Theodora with a faint, sweet smile. ‘I hope, but I never tremble.’

‘You have seen the announcement in the newspapers to-day?’ said Lady Corisande.

‘I think if they were certain of their prey they would be more reserved,’ said Theodora.

‘There is something in that,’ said Lady Corisande musingly. ‘You know not what a relief it is to me to speak to you on this matter. Mamma agrees with me, and so do my sisters ; but still they may agree with me because they are my mamma and my sisters ; but I look upon our nobility joining the Church of Rome as the greatest calamity that has ever happened to England. Irrespective of all religious considerations, on which I will not presume to touch, it is an abnegation of patriotism ; and in this age, when all things are questioned, a love of our country seems to me the one sentiment to cling to.’

‘I know no higher sentiment,’ said Theodora in a low voice, and yet which sounded like the breathing of some divine shrine, and her Athenian eye met the fiery glance of Lady Corisande with an expression of noble sympathy.

‘I am so glad that I spoke to you on this matter,’ said Lady Corisande, ‘for there is something in you which encourages me. As you say, if they were certain, they would be silent; and yet, from what I hear, their hopes are high. You know,’ she added in a whisper, ‘that he has absolutely engaged to raise a Popish Cathedral. My brother, Bertram, has seen the model in his rooms.’

‘I have known models that were never realised,’ said Theodora.

‘Ah! you are hopeful; you said you were hopeful. It is a beautiful disposition. It is not mine,’ she added with a sigh.

‘It should be,’ said Theodora; ‘you were not born to sigh. Sighs should be for those who have no country like myself; not for the daughters of England — the beautiful daughters of proud England.’

‘But you have your husband’s country, and that is proud and great.’

‘I have only one country, and it is not my husband’s; and I have only one thought, and it is to see it free.’

‘It is a noble one,’ said Lady Corisande, ‘as I am sure are all your thoughts. There are the gentlemen; I am sorry they have come. There,’ she added, as Monsignore Catesby entered the room, ‘there is his evil genius.’

‘But you have baffled him,’ said Theodora.

‘Ah!’ said Lady Corisande, with a long-drawn sigh. ‘Their manœuvres never cease. However, I think Monday must be safe. Would you come?’ she said, with a serious, searching glance, and in a kind of coaxing murmur.

‘I should be an intruder, my dear lady,’ said Theodora, declining the suggestion; ‘but so far as hoping that our friend will never join the Church of Rome, you will have ever my ardent wishes.’

Theodora might have added her belief, for Lothair had never concealed from her a single thought or act of his life in this respect. She knew all, and had weighed everything, and flattered herself that their

frequent and unreserved conversations had not confirmed his belief in the infallibility of the Church of Rome, and perhaps of some other things.

It had been settled that there should be dancing this evening—all the young ladies had wished it. Lothair danced with Lady Flora Falkirk, and her sister, Lady Grizell, was in the same quadrille. They moved about like young giraffes in an African forest, but looked bright and happy. Lothair liked his cousins; their inexperience and innocence, and the simplicity with which they exhibited and expressed their feelings, had in it something bewitching. Then the rough remembrance of his old life at Falkirk and its contrast with the present scene, had in it something stimulating. They were his juniors by several years, but they were always gentle and kind to him; and sometimes it seemed he was the only person whom they too had found kind and gentle. He called his cousin too by her christian name, and he

was amused, standing by this beautiful giantess, and calling her Flora. There were other amusing circumstances in the quadrille; not the least, Lord St. Aldegonde dancing with Mrs. Campian. The wonder of Lady St. Aldegonde was only equalled by her delight.

The Lord Lieutenant was standing by the Duke in a corner of the saloon, observing not with dissatisfaction his daughter, Lady Ida Alice, dancing with Lothair.

‘Do you know this is the first time I ever had the honour of meeting a Cardinal?’ he said.

‘And we never expected that it would happen to either of us in this country when we were at Christchurch together,’ replied the Duke.

‘Well, I hope everything is for the best,’ said Lord Agramont. ‘We are to have all these gentlemen in our good city of Grandchester to-morrow.’

‘So I understand.’

‘You read that paragraph in the news-

papers? Do you think there is anything in it?’

‘About our friend? It would be a great misfortune.’

‘The Bishop says there is nothing in it,’ said the Lord Lieutenant.

‘Well, he ought to know. I understand he has had some serious conversation recently with our friend?’

‘Yes; he has spoken to me about it. Are you going to attend the early celebration to-morrow? It is not much to my taste; a little new-fangled, I think; but I shall go, as they say it will do good.’

‘I am glad of that; it is well that he should be impressed at this moment with the importance and opinion of his county.’

‘Do you know I never saw him before,’ said the Lord Lieutenant. ‘He is winning.’

‘I know no youth,’ said the Duke, ‘I would not except my own son, and Bertram has never given me an uneasy moment, of whom I have a better opinion, both as to heart and head. I should deeply deplore his being smashed by a Jesuit.’

The dancing had ceased for a moment; there was a stir; Lord Carisbrooke was enlarging, with unusual animation, to an interested group about a new dance at Paris—the new dance. Could they not have it here? Unfortunately he did not know its name, and could not describe its figure; but it was something new; quite new; they have got it at Paris. Princess Metternich dances it. He danced it with her, and she taught it him; only he never could explain anything, and indeed never did exactly make it out. ‘But you dance it with a shawl, and then two ladies hold the shawl, and the cavaliers pass under it. In fact it is the only thing; it is the new dance at Paris.’

What a pity that anything so delightful should be so indefinite and perplexing, and indeed impossible, which rendered it still more desirable! If Lord Carisbrooke only could have remembered its name, or a single step in its figure—it was so tantalising!

‘Do not you think so?’ said Hugo



Bohun to Mrs. Campian, who was sitting apart listening to Lord St. Aldegonde's account of his travels in the United States, which he was very sorry he ever quitted. And then they enquired to what Mr. Bohun referred, and then he told them all that had been said.

'I know what he means,' said Mrs. Campian. 'It is not a French dance; it is a Moorish dance.'

'That woman knows everything, Hugo,' said Lord St. Aldegonde in a solemn whisper. And then he called to his wife. 'Bertha, Mrs. Campian will tell you all about this dance that Carisbrooke is making such a mull of. Now look here, Bertha; you must get the Campians to come to us as soon as possible. They are going to Scotland from this place, and there is no reason, if you manage it well, why they should not come on to us at once. Now exert yourself.'

'I will do all I can, Granville.'

'It is not French, it is Moorish; it is

called the Tangerine,' said Theodora to her surrounding votaries. 'You begin with a circle.'

'But how are we to dance without the music?' said Lady Montairy.

'Ah! I wish I had known this,' said Theodora, 'before dinner, and I think I could have dotted down something that would have helped us. But let me see,' and she went up to the eminent professor, with whom she was well acquainted, and said, 'Signor Ricci, it begins so,' and she hummed divinely a fantastic air, which, after a few moments' musing, he reproduced; 'and then it goes off into what they call in Spain a saraband. Is there a shawl in the room?'

'My mother has always a shawl in reserve,' said Bertram, 'particularly when she pays visits to houses where there are galleries;' and he brought back a mantle of Cashmere.

'Now, Signor Ricci,' said Mrs. Campian, and she again hummed an air, and moved

forward at the same time with brilliant grace, waving at the end the shawl.

The expression of her countenance, looking round to Signor Ricci, as she was moving on to see whether he had caught her idea, fascinated Lothair.

‘It is exactly what I told you,’ said Lord Carisbrooke, ‘and, I can assure you, it is the only dance now. I am very glad I remembered it.’

‘I see it all,’ said Signor Ricci, as Theodora rapidly detailed to him the rest of the figure. ‘And at any rate it will be the Tangerine with variations.’

‘Let me have the honour of being your partner in this great enterprise,’ said Lothair; ‘you are the inspiration of Muriel.’

‘Oh! I am very glad I can do anything, however slight, to please you and your friends. I like them all; but particularly Lady Corisande.’

A new dance in a country house is a festival of frolic grace. The incomplete knowledge, and the imperfect execution,

are themselves causes of merry excitement, in their contrast with the unimpassioned routine and almost unconscious practice of traditionary performances. And gay and frequent were the bursts of laughter from the bright and airy band who were proud to be the scholars of Theodora. The least successful among them was perhaps Lord Carisbrooke.

‘Princess Metternich must have taught you wrong, Carisbrooke,’ said Hugo Bohun.

They ended with a waltz, Lothair dancing with Miss Arundel. She accepted his offer to take some tea on its conclusion. While they were standing at the table, a little withdrawn from others, and he holding a sugar basin, she said in a low voice, looking on her cup and not at him, ‘The Cardinal is vexed about the early celebration; he says it should have been at midnight.’

‘I am sorry he is vexed,’ said Lothair.

‘He was going to speak to you himself,’ continued Miss Arundel; ‘but he felt a delicacy about it. He had thought that

your common feelings respecting the Church might have induced you if not to consult, at least to converse, with him on the subject; I mean as your guardian.'

'It might have been perhaps as well,' said Lothair; 'but I also feel a delicacy on these matters.'

'There ought to be none on such matters,' continued Miss Arundel, 'when everything is at stake.'

'I do not see that I could have taken any other course than I have done,' said Lothair. 'It can hardly be wrong. The Bishop's church views are sound.'

'Sound!' said Miss Arundel; 'moonshine instead of sunshine.'

'Moonshine would rather suit a midnight than a morning celebration,' said Lothair; 'would it not?'

'A fair repartee, but we are dealing with a question that cannot be settled by jests. See,' she said with great seriousness, putting down her cup and taking again his offered arm, 'you think you are only

complying with a form befitting your position and the occasion. You deceive yourself. You are hampering your future freedom by this step, and they know it. That is why it was planned. It was not necessary; nothing can be necessary so pregnant with evil. You might have made, you might yet make, a thousand excuses. It is a rite which hardly suits the levity of the hour, even with their feelings; but, with your view of its real character, it is sacrilege. What is occurring to-night might furnish you with scruples?' And she looked up in his face.

'I think you take an exaggerated view of what I contemplate,' said Lothair. 'Even with your convictions it may be an imperfect rite; but it never can be an injurious one.'

'There can be no compromise on such matters,' said Miss Arundel. 'The Church knows nothing of imperfect rites. They are all perfect because they are all divine; any deviation from them is heresy,

and fatal. My convictions on this subject are your convictions; act up to them.'

'I am sure if thinking of these matters would guide a man right—' said Lothair with a sigh, and he stopped.

'Human thought will never guide you; and very justly, when you have for a guide Divine truth. You are now your own master; go at once to its fountain-head; go to Rome, and then all your perplexities will vanish, and for ever.'

'I do not see much prospect of my going to Rome,' said Lothair, 'at least at present.'

'Well,' said Miss Arundel; 'in a few weeks I hope to be there; and if so, I hope never to quit it.'

'Do not say that; the future is always unknown.'

'Not yours,' said Miss Arundel. 'Whatever you think, you will go to Rome. Mark my words. I summon you to meet me at Rome.'

## CHAPTER XV.

THERE can be little doubt, generally speaking, that it is more satisfactory to pass Sunday in the country than in town. There is something in the essential stillness of country life, which blends harmoniously with the ordinance of the most divine of our divine laws. It is pleasant too, when the congregation breaks up, to greet one's neighbours; to say kind words to kind faces; to hear some rural news profitable to learn, which sometimes enables you to do some good, and sometimes prevents others from doing some harm. A quiet domestic walk too in the afternoon has its pleasures; and so numerous and so various are the sources of interest in the country, that, though it be Sunday, there is no reason why your walk should not have an object.

But Sunday in the country, with your



house full of visitors, is too often an exception to this general truth. It is a trial. Your guests cannot always be at church, and, if they could, would not like it. There is nothing to interest or amuse them: no sport; no castles or factories to visit; no adventurous expeditions; no gay music in the morn, and no light dance in the evening. There is always danger of the day becoming a course of heavy meals and stupid walks, for the external scene and all its teeming circumstances, natural and human, though full of concern to you, are to your visitors an insipid blank.

How did Sunday go off at Muriel Towers?

In the first place there was a special train, which at an early hour took the Cardinal and his suite and the St. Jerome family to Grandchester, where they were awaited with profound expectation. But the Anglican portion of the guests were not without their share of ecclesiastical and spiritual excitement, for the Bishop was to

preach this day in the chapel of the Towers, a fine and capacious sanctuary of florid Gothic, and his Lordship was a sacerdotal orator of repute.

It had been announced that the breakfast hour was to be somewhat earlier. The ladies in general were punctual, and seemed conscious of some great event impending. The ladies Flora and Grizell entered with, each in their hand, a prayer-book of purple velvet adorned with a decided cross, the gift of the Primus. Lord Culloden, at the request of Lady Corisande, had consented to their hearing the Bishop, which he would not do himself. He passed his morning in finally examining the guardians' accounts, the investigation of which he conducted and concluded during the rest of the day with Mr. Putney Giles. Mrs. Campian did not leave her room. Lord St. Aldegonde came down late, and looked about him with an uneasy, ill-humoured air.

Whether it were the absence of Theodora or some other cause, he was brusque, un-

gracious, scowling, and silent, only nodding to the Bishop who benignly saluted him, refusing every dish that was offered, then getting up and helping himself at the side table, making a great noise with the carving instruments, and flouncing down his plate when he resumed his seat. Nor was his costume correct. All the other gentlemen, though their usual morning dresses were sufficiently fantastic—trunk hose of every form, stockings bright as paroquets, wondrous shirts, and velvet coats of every tint—habited themselves to-day, both as regards form and colour, in a style indicative of the subdued gravity of their feelings. Lord St. Aldegonde had on his shooting jacket of brown velvet and a pink shirt and no cravat, and his rich brown locks, always to a certain degree neglected, were peculiarly dishevelled.

Hugo Bohun, who was not afraid of him and was a high churchman, being in religion and in all other matters always on the side of the Duchesses, said, ‘ Well, St.

Aldegonde, are you going to chapel in that dress ?' But St. Aldegonde would not answer; he gave a snort and glanced at Hugo with the eye of a gladiator.

The meal was over. The Bishop was standing near the mantelpiece talking to the ladies, who were clustered round him; the Archdeacon and the Chaplain and some other clergy a little in the background; Lord St. Aldegonde, who, whether there were a fire or not, always stood with his back to the fireplace with his hands in his pockets, moved discourteously among them, assumed his usual position, and listened, as it were grimly, for a few moments to their talk; then he suddenly exclaimed in a loud voice, and with the groan of a rebellious Titan, 'How I hate Sunday!'

'Granville!' exclaimed Lady St. Aldegonde turning pale. There was a general shudder.

'I mean in a country-house,' said Lord St. Aldegonde. 'Of course I mean in a country-house. I do not dislike it when

alone, and I do not dislike it in London. But Sunday in a country-house is infernal.'

'I think it is now time for us to go,' said the Bishop, walking away with dignified reserve, and they all dispersed.

The service was choral and intoned; for although the Rev. Dionysius Smylie had not yet had time or opportunity, as was his intention, to form and train a choir from the household of the Towers, he had secured from his neighbouring parish and other sources external and effective aid in that respect. The parts of the service were skilfully distributed, and rarely were a greater number of priests enlisted in a more imposing manner. A good organ was well played; the singing, as usual, a little too noisy; there was an anthem and an introit—but no incense, which was forbidden by the Bishop; and though there were candles on the altar, they were not permitted to be lighted.

The sermon was most successful; the ladies returned with elate and animated

faces, quite enthusiastic and almost forgetting in their satisfaction the terrible outrage of Lord St. Aldegonde. He himself had by this time repented of what he had done and recovered his temper, and greeted his wife with a voice and look which indicated to her practised senses the favourable change.

‘Bertha,’ he said, ‘you know I did not mean anything personal to the Bishop in what I said. I do not like Bishops; I think there is no use in them; but I have no objection to him personally; I think him an agreeable man; not at all a bore. Just put it right, Bertha. But I tell you what, Bertha, I cannot go to church here. Lord Culloden does not go, and he is a very religious man. He is the man I most agree with on these matters. I am a free churchman, and there is an end of it. I cannot go this afternoon. I do not approve of the whole thing. It is altogether against my conscience. What I mean to do, if I can manage it, is to take a real long walk with the Campians.’

Mrs. Campian appeared at luncheon. The Bishop was attentive to her; even cordial. He was resolved she should not feel he was annoyed by her not having been a member of his congregation in the morning. Lady Corisande too had said to him, 'I wish so much you would talk to Mrs. Campian; she is a sweet, noble creature, and so clever! I feel that she might be brought to view things in the right light.'

'I never know,' said the Bishop, 'how to deal with these American ladies. I never can make out what they believe, or what they disbelieve. It is a sort of confusion between Mrs. Beecher Stowe and the Fifth Avenue congregation and—Barnum,' he added with a twinkling eye.

The second service was late; the Dean preached. The lateness of the hour permitted the Lord Lieutenant and those guests who had arrived only the previous day to look over the castle, or ramble about the gardens. St. Aldegonde succeeded in his

scheme of a real long walk with the Campians, which Lothair, bound to listen to the head of his college, was not permitted to share.

In the evening Signor Mardoni, who had arrived, and Madame Isola Bella favoured them with what they called sacred music ; principally prayers from operas and a grand Stabat Mater.

Lord Culloden invited Lothair into a further saloon, where they might speak without disturbing the performers or the audience.

‘I’ll just take advantage, my dear boy,’ said Lord Culloden, in a tone of unusual tenderness, and of Doric accent, ‘of the absence of these gentlemen to have a little quiet conversation with you. Though I have not seen so much of you of late as in old days, I take a great interest in you, no doubt of that, and I was very pleased to see how good-natured you were to the girls. You have romped with them when they were little ones. Now, in a few hours,



you will be master of a great inheritance, and I hope it will profit ye. I have been over the accounts with Mr. Giles, and I was pleased to hear that you had made yourself properly acquainted with them in detail. Never you sign any paper without reading it first, and knowing well what it means. You will have to sign a release to us if you be satisfied, and that you may easily be. My poor brother-in-law left you as large an income as may be found on this side Trent, but I will be bound he would stare if he saw the total of the whole of your rentroll, Lothair. Your affairs have been well administered, though I say it who ought not. But it is not my management only, or principally, that has done it. It is the progress of the country, and you owe the country a good deal, and you should never forget you are born to be a protector of its liberties, civil and religious. And if the country sticks to free trade, and would enlarge its currency, and be firm to the Protestant faith, it will,

under Divine Providence, continue to progress.

‘ And here, my boy, I’ll just say a word, in no disagreeable manner, about your religious principles. There are a great many stories about, and perhaps they are not true, and I am sure I hope they are not. If Popery were only just the sign of the cross, and music, and censer-pots, though I think them all superstitious, I’d be free to leave them alone if they would leave me. But Popery is a much deeper thing than that, Lothair, and our fathers found it out. They could not stand it, and we should be a craven crew to stand it now. A man should be master in his own house. You will be taking a wife some day ; at least it is to be hoped so ; and how will you like one of these Monsignores to be walking into her bed-room, eh ; and talking to her alone when he pleases, and where he pleases ; and when you want to consult your wife, which a wise man should often do, to find there is another mind between hers and yours ? There’s

my girls, they are just two young geese, and they have a hankering after Popery, having had a Jesuit in the house. I do not know what has become of the women. They are for going into a convent, and they are quite right in that, for if they be Papists they will not find a husband easily in Scotland, I ween.

‘And as for you, my boy, they will be telling you that it is only just this and just that, and there’s no great difference, and what not ; but I tell you that if once you embrace the scarlet lady, you are a tainted corpse. You’ll not be able to order your dinner without a priest, and they will ride your best horses without saying with your leave or by your leave.’

The concert in time ceased ; there was a stir in the room ; the Rev. Dionysius Smylie moved about mysteriously, and ultimately seemed to make an obeisance before the Bishop. It was time for prayers.

‘Shall you go ?’ said Lord St. Aldegonde to Mrs. Campian, by whom he was sitting.

‘I like to pray alone,’ she answered.

‘As for that,’ said St. Aldegonde, ‘I am not clear we ought to pray at all; either in public or private. It seems very arrogant in us to dictate to an all-wise Creator what we desire.’

‘I believe in the efficacy of prayer,’ said Theodora.

‘And I believe in you,’ said St. Aldegonde, after a momentary pause.

## CHAPTER XVI.

ON the morrow, the early celebration in the chapel was numerously attended. The Duchess and her daughters, Lady Agramont, and Mrs. Ardenne were among the faithful; but what encouraged and gratified the Bishop was, that the laymen, on whom he less relied, were numerously represented. The Lord Lieutenant, Lord Carisbrooke, Lord Montairy, Bertram, and Hugo Bohun accompanied Lothair to the altar.

After the celebration, Lothair retired to his private apartments. It was arranged that he was to join his assembled friends at noon, when he would receive their congratulations, and some deputations from the county.

At noon, therefore, preparatively preceded by Mr. Putney Giles, whose thought

was never asleep, and whose eye was on everything, the guardians, the Cardinal and the Earl of Culloden, waited on Lothair to accompany him to his assembled friends, and, as it were, launch him into the world.

They were assembled at one end of the chief gallery, and in a circle. Although the deputations would have to advance the whole length of the chamber, Lothair and his guardians entered from a side apartment. Even with this assistance he felt very nervous. There was no lack of feeling, and, among many, of deep feeling, on this occasion, but there was an equal and a genuine exhibition of ceremony.

The Lord Lieutenant was the first person who congratulated Lothair, though the High Sheriff had pushed forward for that purpose, but, in his awkward precipitation, he got involved with the train of the Hon. Lady Clotworthy, who bestowed on him such a withering glance, that he felt a routed man, and gave up the attempt. There were many kind and some earnest words.

Even St. Aldegonde acknowledged the genius of the occasion. He was grave, graceful, and dignified, and addressing Lothair by his title he said, ‘that he hoped he would meet in life that happiness which he felt confident he deserved.’ Theodora said nothing, though her lips seemed once to move; but she retained for a moment Lothair’s hand, and the expression of her countenance touched his innermost heart. Lady Corisande beamed with dazzling beauty. Her countenance was joyous, radiant; her mien imperial and triumphant. She gave her hand with graceful alacrity to Lothair, and said in a hushed tone, but every word of which reached his ear, ‘One of the happiest hours of my life was eight o’clock this morning.’

The Lord Lieutenant and the county members then retired to the other end of the gallery, and ushered in the deputation of the magistracy of the county, congratulating their new brother, for Lothair had just been appointed to the bench, on his ac-

cession to his estates. The Lord Lieutenant himself read the address, to which Lothair replied with a propriety all acknowledged. Then came the address of the Mayor and Corporation of Grandchester, of which city Lothair was hereditary high steward; and then that of his tenantry, which was cordial and characteristic. And here many were under the impression that this portion of the proceedings would terminate; but it was not so. There had been some whispering between the Bishop and the Archdeacon, and the Rev. Dionysius Smylie had, after conference with his superiors, twice left the chamber. It seems that the clergy had thought fit to take this occasion of congratulating Lothair on his great accession, and the proportionate duties which it would fall on him to fulfil. The Bishop approached Lothair and addressed him in a whisper. Lothair seemed surprised and a little agitated, but apparently bowed assent. Then the Bishop and his staff proceeded to the end of the gallery



and introduced a diocesan deputation, consisting of archdeacons and rural deans, who presented to Lothair a most uncompromising address, and begged his acceptance of a bible and prayer-book richly bound, and borne by the Rev. Dionysius Smylie on a cushion of velvet.

The habitual pallor of the Cardinal's countenance became unusually wan; the cheek of Clare Arundel was a crimson flush; Monsignore Catesby bit his lip; Theodora looked with curious seriousness as if she were observing the manners of a foreign country; St. Aldegonde snorted and pushed his hand through his hair, which had been arranged in unusual order. The great body of those present, unaware that this deputation was unexpected, were unmoved.

It was a trial for Lothair, and scarcely a fair one. He was not unequal to it, and what he said was esteemed at the moment by all parties as satisfactory; though the Archdeacon in secret conclave afterwards

observed, that he dwelt more on Religion than on the Church, and spoke of the Church of Christ and not of the Church of England. He thanked them for their present of volumes which all must reverence or respect.

While all this was taking place within the Towers, vast bodies of people were assembling without. Besides the notables of the county and his tenantry and their families, which drained all the neighbouring villages, Lothair had forwarded several thousand tickets to the Mayor and Corporation of Grandchester, for distribution among their fellow-townsmen, who were invited to dine at Muriel and partake of the festivities of the day, and trains were hourly arriving with their eager and happy guests. The gardens were at once open for their unrestricted pleasure, but at two o'clock, according to the custom of the county under such circumstances, Lothair held what in fact was a levée, or rather a

drawing-room, when every person who possessed a ticket was permitted, and even invited and expected, to pass through the whole range of the state apartments of Muriel Towers, and at the same time pay their respects to, and make the acquaintance of, their lord.

Lothair stood with his chief friends near him, the ladies however seated, and everyone passed—farmers and townsmen and honest folk down to the stokers of the trains from Grandchester, with whose presence St. Aldegonde was much pleased, and whom he carefully addressed as they passed by.

After this great reception they all dined in pavilions in the park—one thousand tenantry by themselves and at a fixed hour; the miscellaneous multitude in a huge crimson tent, very lofty, with many flags, and in which was served a banquet that never stopped till sunset, so that in time all might be satisfied; the notables and deputations, with the guests in the

house, lunched in the armoury. It was a bright day, and there was unceasing music.

In the course of the afternoon, Lothair visited the pavilions, where his health was proposed and pledged — in the first by one of his tenants, and in the other by a workman, both orators of repute; and he addressed and thanked his friends. This immense multitude, orderly and joyous, roamed about the parks and gardens, or danced on a platform which the prescient experience of Mr. Giles had provided for them in a due locality, and whiled away the pleasant hours, in expectation a little feverish of the impending fireworks, which, there was a rumour, were to be on a scale and in a style of which neither Grandchester nor the county had any tradition.

‘I remember your words at Blenheim,’ said Lothair to Theodora. ‘You cannot say the present party is founded on the principle of exclusion.’

In the meantime, about six o’clock,

Lothair dined in his great hall with his two hundred guests at a banquet where all the resources of nature and art seemed called upon to contribute to its luxury and splendour. The ladies who had never before dined at a public dinner were particularly delighted. They were delighted by the speeches, though they had very few ; they were delighted by the national anthem, all rising ; particularly they were delighted by ‘three times three and one cheer more,’ and ‘hip, hip.’ It seemed to their unpractised ears like a great naval battle, or the end of the world, or anything else of unimaginable excitement, tumult, and confusion.

The Lord Lieutenant proposed Lothair’s health, and dexterously made his comparative ignorance of the subject the cause of his attempting a sketch of what he hoped might be the character of the person whose health he proposed. Everyone intuitively felt the resemblance was just and even complete, and Lothair confirmed their

kind and sanguine anticipations by his terse and well-considered reply. His proposition of the ladies' healths was a signal that the carriages were ready to take them, as arranged, to Muriel Mere.

The sun had set in glory over the broad expanse of waters still glowing in the dying beam; the people were assembled in thousands on the borders of the lake, in the centre of which was an island with a pavilion. Fanciful barges and gondolas of various shapes and colours were waiting for Lothair and his party, to carry them over to the pavilion, where they found a repast which became the hour and the scene—coffee and ices and whimsical drinks, which sultanas would sip in Arabian tales. No sooner were they seated than the sound of music was heard—distant, but now nearer, till there came floating on the lake, until it rested before the pavilion, a gigantic shell, larger than the building itself, but holding in its golden and opal seats Signor Mardoni and all his orchestra.

Then came a concert rare in itself, but ravishing in the rosy twilight; and in about half an hour, when the rosy twilight had subsided into a violet eve, and when the white moon that had only gleamed began to glitter, the colossal shell again moved on, and Lothair and his companions embarking once more in their gondolas, followed it in procession about the lake. He carried in his own barque the Duchess, Theodora, and the Lord Lieutenant, and was rowed by a crew in Venetian dresses. As he handed Theodora to her seat the impulse was irresistible—he pressed her hand to his lips.

Suddenly a rocket rose with a hissing rush from the pavilion. It was instantly responded to from every quarter of the lake. Then the island seemed on fire, and the scene of their late festivity became a brilliant palace, with pediments and columns and statues, bright in the blaze of coloured flame. For half an hour the sky seemed covered with blue lights and the bursting

forms of many-coloured stars; golden fountains, like the eruption of a marine volcano, rose from different parts of the water; the statued palace on the island changed and became a forest glowing with green light; and finally a temple of cerulean tint, on which appeared in huge letters of prismatic colour the name of Lothair.

The people cheered, but even the voice of the people was overcome by troops of rockets rising from every quarter of the lake, and by the thunder of artillery. When the noise and the smoke had both subsided, the name of Lothair still legible on the temple but the letters quite white, it was perceived that on every height for fifty miles round they had fired a beacon.



## CHAPTER XVII.

THE ball at Muriel which followed the concert on the lake was one of those balls which, it would seem, never would end. All the preliminary festivities, instead of exhausting the guests of Lothair, appeared only to have excited them, and rendered them more romantic and less tolerant of the routine of existence. They danced in the great gallery, which was brilliant and crowded, and they danced as they dance in a festive dream, with joy and the enthusiasm of gaiety. The fine ladies would sanction no exclusiveness. They did not confine their inspiring society, as is sometimes too often the case, to the Brecons and the Bertrams and the Carisbrookes; they danced fully and freely with the youth of the county, and felt that in so doing

they were honouring and gratifying their host.

At one o'clock they supped in the armoury, which was illuminated for the first time, and a banquet in a scene so picturesque and resplendent renovated not merely their physical energies. At four o'clock the Duchess and a few others quietly disappeared, but her daughters remained, and St. Aldegonde danced endless reels, which was a form in which he preferred to worship Terpsichore. Perceiving by an open window that it was dawn, he came up to Lothair and said, 'This is a case of breakfast.'

Happy and frolicsome suggestion! The invitations circulated, and it was soon known that they were all to gather at the matin meal.

'I am so sorry that her Grace has retired,' said Hugo Bohun to Lady St. Aldegonde, as he fed her with bread and butter, 'because she always likes early breakfasts in the country.'

The sun was shining as the guests of the house retired, and sank into couches from which it seemed they never could rise again; but, long after this, the shouts of servants and the scuffle of carriages intimated that the company in general were not so fortunate and expeditious in their retirement from the scene; and the fields were all busy, and even the towns awake, when the great body of the wearied but delighted wassailers returned from celebrating the majority of Lothair.

In the vast and statesmanlike programme of the festivities of the week, which had been prepared by Mr. and Mrs. Putney Giles, something of interest and importance had been appropriated to the morrow, but it was necessary to erase all this; and for a simple reason—no human being on the morrow morn even appeared—one might say, even stirred. After all the gay tumult in which even thousands had joined, Muriel Towers on the morrow presented a scene which only could have been

equalled by the castle in the fairy tale inhabited by the Sleeping Beauty.

At length, about two hours after noon, bells began to sound which were not always answered. Then a languid household prepared a meal of which no one for a time partook, till at last a Monsignore appeared and a rival Anglican or two. Then St. Aldegonde came in with a troop of men who had been bathing in the mere, and called loudly for kidneys, which happened to be the only thing not at hand, as is always the case. St. Aldegonde always required kidneys when he had sate up all night and bathed. 'But the odd thing is,' he said, 'you never can get anything to eat in these houses. Their infernal cooks spoil everything. That is why I hate staying with Bertha's people in the north at the end of the year. What I want in November is a slice of cod and a beefsteak, and by Jove I never could get them; I was obliged to come to town. It is no joke to have to travel three hundred miles for a slice of cod and a beefsteak.'

Notwithstanding all this, however, such is the magic of custom, that by sunset civilisation had resumed its reign at Muriel Towers. The party were assembled before dinner in the saloon, and really looked as fresh and bright as if the exhausting and tumultuous yesterday had never happened. The dinner, too, notwithstanding the criticism of St. Aldegonde, was first-rate, and pleased palates not so simply fastidious as his own. The Bishop and his suite were to depart on the morrow, but the Cardinal was to remain. His Eminence talked much to Mrs. Campian, by whom, from the first, he was much struck. He was aware that she was born a Roman, and was not surprised that, having married a citizen of the United States, her sympathies were what are styled liberal; but this only stimulated his anxious resolution to accomplish her conversion, both religious and political. He recognised in her a being whose intelligence, imagination, and grandeur of character might be of invaluable service to the Church.

In the evening Monsieur Raphael and his sister, and their colleagues, gave a representation which was extremely well done. There was no theatre at Muriel, but Apollonia had felicitously arranged a contiguous saloon for the occasion, and, as everybody was at ease in an arm-chair, they all agreed it was preferable to a regular theatre.

On the morrow they were to lunch with the Mayor and Corporation of Grandchester and view some of the principal factories; on the next day the county gave a dinner to Lothair in their hall, the Lord Lieutenant in the chair; on Friday there was to be a ball at Grandchester given by the county and city united to celebrate the great local event. It was whispered that this was to be a considerable affair. There was not an hour of the week that was not appropriated to some festive ceremony.

It happened on the morning of Friday, the Cardinal being alone with Lothair, transacting some lingering business connected with the guardianship, and on his

legs as he spoke, that he said, 'We live in such a happy tumult here, my dear child, that I have never had an opportunity of speaking to you on one or two points which interest me and should not be uninteresting to you. I remember a pleasant morning-walk we had in the park at Vauxe, when we began a conversation which we never finished. What say you to a repetition of our stroll? 'Tis a lovely day, and I dare say we might escape by this window, and gain some green retreat without anyone disturbing us.'

'I am quite of your Eminence's mind,' said Lothair, taking up a wide-awake, 'and I will lead you where it is not likely we shall be disturbed.'

So winding their way through the pleasure-grounds, they entered by a wicket a part of the park where the sunny glades soon wandered among the tall fern and wild groves of venerable oaks.

'I sometimes feel,' said the Cardinal, 'that I may have been too punctilious in

avoiding conversation with you on a subject the most interesting and important to man. But I felt a delicacy in exerting my influence as a guardian on a subject my relations to which, when your dear father appointed me to that office, were so different from those which now exist. But you are now your own master; I can use no control over you but that influence which the words of truth must always exercise over an ingenuous mind.'

His Eminence paused for a moment and looked at his companion; but Lothair remained silent, with his eyes fixed upon the ground.

'It has always been a source of satisfaction, I would even say consolation, to me,' resumed the Cardinal, 'to know you were a religious man; that your disposition was reverential, which is the highest order of temperament, and brings us nearest to the angels. But we live in times of difficulty and danger—extreme difficulty and danger; a religious disposition may suffice for youth



in the tranquil hour, and he may find, in due season, his appointed resting-place: but these are days of imminent peril; the soul requires a sanctuary. Is yours at hand?’

The Cardinal paused, and Lothair was obliged to meet a direct appeal. He said then, after a momentary hesitation, ‘When you last spoke to me, sir, on these grave matters, I said I was in a state of great despondency. My situation now is not so much despondent as perplexed.’

‘And I wish you to tell me the nature of your perplexity,’ replied the Cardinal, ‘for there is no anxious embarrassment of mind which Divine truth cannot disentangle and allay.’

‘Well,’ said Lothair, ‘I must say I am often perplexed at the differences which obtrude themselves between Divine truth and human knowledge.’

‘Those are inevitable,’ said the Cardinal. ‘Divine truth being unchangeable, and human knowledge changing every

century; rather, I should say, every generation.'

'Perhaps, instead of human knowledge, I should have said human progress,' rejoined Lothair.

'Exactly,' said the Cardinal, 'but what is progress? Movement. But what if it be movement in the wrong direction? What if it be a departure from Divine truth?'

'But I cannot understand why religion should be inconsistent with civilisation,' said Lothair.

'Religion is civilisation,' said the Cardinal; 'the highest: it is a reclamation of man from savageness by the Almighty. What the world calls civilisation, as distinguished from religion, is a retrograde movement, and will ultimately lead us back to the barbarism from which we have escaped. For instance, you talk of progress, what is the chief social movement of all the countries that three centuries ago separated from the unity of the Church of Christ? The rejection of the sacrament of Chris-

tian matrimony. The introduction of the law of divorce, which is, in fact, only a middle term to the abolition of marriage. What does that mean? The extinction of the home and the household on which God has rested civilisation. If there be no home, the child belongs to the state, not to the parent. The state educates the child, and without religion, because the state in a country of progress acknowledges no religion. For every man is not only to think as he likes, but to write and to speak as he likes, and to sow with both hands broadcast where he will, errors, heresies, and blasphemies, without any authority on earth to restrain the scattering of this seed of universal desolation. And this system, which would substitute for domestic sentiment and Divine belief the unlimited and licentious action of human intellect and human will, is called progress. What is it but a revolt against God !'

'I am sure I wish there were only one Church and one religion,' said Lothair.

‘ There is only one Church and only one religion,’ said the Cardinal; ‘ all other forms and phrases are mere phantasms, without root, or substance, or coherency. Look at that unhappy Germany, once so proud of its Reformation. What they call the leading journal tells us to-day, that it is a question there whether four-fifths or three-fourths of the population believe in Christianity. Some portion of it has already gone back, I understand, to NUMBER NIP. Look at this unfortunate land, divided, subdivided, parcelled out in infinite schism, with new oracles every day, and each more distinguished for the narrowness of his intellect or the loudness of his lungs; once the land of saints and scholars, and people in pious pilgrimages, and finding always solace and support in the divine offices of an ever-present Church, which were a true though a faint type of the beautiful future that awaited man. Why, only three centuries of this rebellion against the Most High have produced throughout the world, on the

subject the most important that man should possess a clear, firm faith, an anarchy of opinion throwing out every monstrous and fantastic form, from a caricature of the Greek philosophy to a revival of Fetism.'

'It is a chaos,' said Lothair, with a sigh.

'From which I wish to save you,' said the Cardinal, with some eagerness. 'This is not a time to hesitate. You must be for God, or for Antichrist. The Church calls upon her children.'

'I am not unfaithful to the Church,' said Lothair, 'which was the Church of my fathers.'

'The Church of England,' said the Cardinal. 'It was mine. I think of it ever with tenderness and pity. Parliament made the Church of England, and Parliament will unmake the Church of England. The Church of England is not the Church of the English. Its fate is sealed. It will soon become a sect, and all sects are fantastic. It will adopt new dogmas, or it will abjure old ones; anything to distinguish

it from the non-conforming herd in which, nevertheless, it will be its fate to merge. The only cconsoling hope is that, when it falls, many of its children, by the aid of the Blessed Virgin, may return to Christ.'

'What I regret, sir,' said Lothair, 'is that the Church of Rome should have placed itself in antagonism with political liberty. This adds to the difficulties which the religious cause has to encounter; for it seems impossible to deny that political freedom is now the sovereign passion of communities.'

'I cannot admit,' replied the Cardinal, that the Church is in antagonism with political freedom. On the contrary, in my opinion, there can be no political freedom which is not founded on divine authority; otherwise it can be at the best but a specious phantom of licence inevitably terminating in anarchy. The rights and liberties of the people of Ireland have no advocates except the Church; because there, political freedom is founded on Divine

authority; but if you mean by political freedom the schemes of the illuminati and the freemasons which perpetually torture the Continent, all the dark conspiracies of the secret societies, there, I admit, the Church is in antagonism with such aspirations after liberty; those aspirations, in fact, are blasphemy and plunder; and if the Church were to be destroyed, Europe would be divided between the Atheist and the Communist.'

There was a pause; the conversation had unexpectedly arrived at a point where neither party cared to pursue it. Lothair felt he had said enough; the Cardinal was disappointed with what Lothair had said. His Eminence felt that his late ward was not in that ripe state of probation which he had fondly anticipated; but being a man not only of vivid perception, but also of fertile resource, while he seemed to close the present conversation, he almost immediately pursued his object by another combination of means. Noticing an effect of

scenery which pleased him, reminded him of Styria, and so on, he suddenly said: 'You should travel.'

'Well, Bertram wants me to go to Egypt with him,' said Lothair.

'A most interesting country,' said the Cardinal, 'and well worth visiting. It is astonishing what a good guide old Herodotus still is in that land! But you should know something of Europe before you go there. Egypt is rather a land to end with. A young man should visit the chief capitals of Europe, especially the seats of learning and the arts. If my advice were asked by a young man who contemplated travelling on a proper scale, I should say begin with Rome. Almost all that Europe contains is derived from Rome. It is always best to go to the fountain-head, to study the original. The society too, there, is delightful: I know none equal to it. That, if you please, is civilisation—pious and refined. And the people—all so gifted and so good—so kind, so orderly, so charitable,



so truly virtuous. I believe the Roman people to be the best people that ever lived, and this too while the secret societies have their foreign agents in every quarter, trying to corrupt them, but always in vain. If an act of political violence occurs, you may be sure it is confined entirely to foreigners.'

'Our friends the St. Jeromes are going to Rome,' said Lothair.

'Well, and that would be pleasant for you. Think seriously of this, my dear young friend. I could be of some little service to you if you go to Rome, which, after all, every man ought to do. I could put you in the way of easily becoming acquainted with all the right people, who would take care that you saw Rome with profit and advantage.'

Just at this moment, in a winding glade, they were met abruptly by a third person. All seemed rather to start at the sudden rencounter; and then Lothair eagerly advanced and welcomed the stranger with a proffered hand.

‘This is a most unexpected, but to me most agreeable, meeting,’ he said. ‘You must now be my guest.’

‘That would be a great honour,’ said the stranger, ‘but one I cannot enjoy. I had to wait at the station a couple of hours or so for my train, and they told me if I strolled here I should find some pretty country. I have been so pleased with it, that I fear I have strolled too long, and I literally have not an instant at my command,’ and he hurried away.

‘Who is that person?’ asked the Cardinal with some agitation.

‘I have not the slightest idea,’ said Lothair. ‘All I know is, he once saved my life.’

‘And all I know is,’ said the Cardinal, ‘he once threatened mine.’

‘Strange!’ said Lothair, and then he rapidly recounted to the Cardinal his adventure at the Fenian meeting.

‘Strange!’ echoed his Eminence.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

MRS. CAMPIAN did not appear at luncheon, which was observed but not noticed. Afterwards, while Lothair was making some arrangements for the amusement of his guests, and contriving that they should fit in with the chief incident of the day, which was the banquet given to him by the county, and which it was settled the ladies were not to attend, the Colonel took him aside and said, 'I do not think that Theodora will care to go out to-day.'

'She is not unwell, I hope?'

'Not exactly—but she has had some news, some news of some friends, which has disturbed her. And if you will excuse me, I will request your permission not to attend the dinner to-day, which I had hoped to have had the honour of doing.'

But I think our plans must be changed a little. I almost think we shall not go to Scotland after all.'

'There is not the slightest necessity for your going to the dinner. You will have plenty to keep you in countenance at home. Lord St. Aldegonde is not going, nor I fancy any of them. I shall take the Duke with me and Lord Culloden, and if you do not go, I shall take Mr. Putney Giles. The Lord Lieutenant will meet us there. I am sorry about Mrs. Campian, because I know she is not ever put out by little things. May I not see her in the course of the day? I should be very sorry that the day should pass over without seeing her.'

'Oh! I dare say she will see you in the course of the day, before you go.'

'When she likes. I shall not go out to-day; I shall keep in my rooms, always at her commands. Between ourselves I shall not be sorry to have a quiet morning and collect my ideas a little. Speech-

making is a new thing for me. I wish you would tell me what to say to the county.'

Lothair had appropriated to the Campians one of the most convenient and complete apartments in the castle. It consisted of four chambers, one of them a saloon which had been fitted up for his mother when she married; a pretty saloon, hung with pale green silk, and portraits and scenes inlaid by Vanloo and Boucher. It was rather late in the afternoon when Lothair received a message from Theodora in reply to the wish that he had expressed of seeing her.

When he entered the room she was not seated, her countenance was serious. She advanced, and thanked him for wishing to see her, and regretted she could not receive him at an earlier hour. 'I fear it may have inconvenienced you,' she added; 'but my mind has been much disturbed, and too agitated for conversation.'

'Even now I may be an intruder?'

'No, it is past; on the contrary, I wish

to speak to you ; indeed, you are the only person with whom I could speak,' and she sate down.

Her countenance, which was unusually pale when he entered, became flushed. 'It is not a subject for the festive hour of your life,' she said, 'but I cannot resist my fate.'

'Your fate must always interest me,' murmured Lothair.

'Yes, but my fate is the fate of ages and of nations,' said Theodora, throwing up her head with that tumult of the brow which he had once before noticed. 'Amid the tortures of my spirit at this moment, not the least is that there is only one person I can appeal to, and he is one to whom I have no right to make that appeal.'

'If I be that person,' said Lothair, 'you have every right, for I am devoted to you.'

'Yes ; but it is not personal devotion that is the qualification needed. It is not sympathy with me that would authorise such an appeal. It must be sympathy

with a cause, and a cause for which I fear you do not — perhaps I should say you cannot—feel.’

‘Why?’ said Lothair.

‘Why should you feel for my fallen country, who are the proudest citizen of the proudest of lands? Why should you feel for its debasing thralldom—you who, in the religious mystification of man, have at least the noble privilege of being a Protestant?’

‘You speak of Rome?’

‘Yes, of the only thought I have or ever had. I speak of that country which first impressed upon the world a general and enduring form of masculine virtue; the land of liberty, and law, and eloquence, and military genius, now garrisoned by monks and governed by a doting priest.’

‘Everybody must be interested about Rome,’ said Lothair. ‘Rome is the country of the world, and even the doting priest you talk of boasts of two hundred millions of subjects.’

‘ If he were at Avignon again, I should not care for his boasts,’ said Theodora. ‘ I do not grudge him his spiritual subjects ; I am content to leave his superstition to Time. Time is no longer slow ; his scythe mows quickly in this age. But when his debasing creeds are palmed off on man by the authority of our glorious Capitol, and the slavery of the human mind is schemed and carried on in the Forum, then, if there be real Roman blood left, and I thank my Creator there is much, it is time for it to mount and move,’ and she rose and walked up and down the room.

‘ You have had news from Rome ?’ said Lothair.

‘ I have had news from Rome,’ she replied, speaking slowly in a deep voice. And there was a pause.

Then Lothair said, ‘ When you have alluded to these matters before, you never spoke of them in a sanguine spirit.’

‘ I have seen the cause triumph,’ said Theodora ; ‘ the sacred cause of truth, of



justice, of national honour. I have sate at the feet of the triumvirate of the Roman Republic ; men who for virtue, and genius, and warlike skill and valour, and every quality that exalts man, were never surpassed in the olden time—no, not by the Catos and the Scipios ; and I have seen the blood of my own race poured like a rich vintage on the victorious Roman soil : my father fell, who in stature and in mien was a god ; and, since then, my beautiful brothers, with shapes to enshrine in temples ; and I have smiled amid the slaughter of my race, for I believed that Rome was free ; and yet all this vanished. How then, when we talked, could I be sanguine ?’

‘ And yet you are sanguine now ? ’ said Lothair, with a scrutinising glance, and he rose and joined her, leaning slightly on the mantel-piece.

‘ There was only one event that could secure the success of our efforts,’ said Theodora, ‘ and that event was so improbable, that I had long rejected it from

calculation. It has happened, and Rome calls upon me to act.

‘The Papalini are strong,’ continued Theodora after a pause; ‘they have been long preparing for the French evacuation; they have a considerable and disciplined force of Janissaries, a powerful artillery, the strong places of the city. The result of a rising under such circumstances might be more than doubtful; if unsuccessful, to us it would be disastrous. It is necessary that the Roman States should be invaded, and the Papal army must then quit their capital. We have no fear of them in the field. Yes,’ she added with energy, ‘we could sweep them from the face of the earth!’

‘But the army of Italy,’ said Lothair, ‘will that be inert?’

‘There it is,’ said Theodora. ‘That has been our stumbling-block. I have always known that if ever the French quitted Rome it would be on the understanding that the house of Savoy should inherit the

noble office of securing our servitude. He in whom I alone confide would never credit this, but my information in this respect was authentic. However, it is no longer necessary to discuss the question. News has come, and in no uncertain shape, that whatever may have been the understanding, under no circumstances will the Italian army enter the Roman State. We must strike, therefore, and Rome will be free. But how am I to strike? We have neither money nor arms. We have only men. I can give them no more, because I have already given them everything except my life, which is always theirs. As for my husband, who, I may say, wedded me on the battle-field, so far as wealth was concerned he was then a prince among princes, and would pour forth his treasure and his life with equal eagerness. But things have changed since Aspromonte. The struggle in his own country has entirely deprived him of revenues as great as any forfeited by their Italian princelings. In fact it is

only by a chance that he is independent. Had it not been for an excellent man, one of your great English merchants, who was his agent here and managed his affairs, we should have been penniless. His judicious investments of the superfluity of our income, which at the time my husband never even noticed, have secured for Colonel Campian the means of that decorous life which he appreciates—but no more. As for myself these considerations are nothing. I will not say I should be insensible to a refined life with refined companions, if the spirit were content and the heart serene; but I never could fully realise the abstract idea of what they call wealth; I never could look upon it except as a means to an end, and my end has generally been military material. Perhaps the vicissitudes of my life have made me insensible to what are called reverses of fortune, for when a child I remember sleeping on the moonlit flags of Paris, with no pillow except my tambourine, and I remember it not without

delight. Let us sit down. I feel I am talking in an excited, injudicious, egotistical, rhapsodical manner. I thought I was calm and I meant to have been clear. But the fact is I am ashamed of myself. I am doing a wrong thing and in a wrong manner. But I have had a sleepless night and a day of brooding thought. I meant once to have asked you to help me, and now I feel that you are the last person to whom I ought to appeal.'

'In that you are in error,' said Lothair rising and taking her hand with an expression of much gravity; 'I am the right person for you to appeal to—the only person.'

'Nay,' said Theodora, and she shook her head.

'For I owe to you a debt that I never can repay,' continued Lothair. 'Had it not been for you, I should have remained what I was when we first met, a prejudiced, narrow-minded being, with contracted sympathies and false knowledge, wasting my

life on obsolete trifles, and utterly insensible to the privilege of living in this wondrous age of change and progress. Why, had it not been for you I should have at this very moment been lavishing my fortune on an ecclesiastical toy, which I think of with a blush. There may be—doubtless there are—opinions in which we may not agree; but in our love of truth and justice there is no difference, dearest lady. No; though you must have felt that I am not—that no one could be—insensible to your beauty and infinite charms, still it is your consummate character that has justly fascinated my thought and heart; and I have long resolved, were I permitted, to devote to you my fortune and my life.'

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE month of September was considerably advanced, when a cab, evidently from its luggage fresh from the railway, entered the courtyard of Hexham House, of which the shuttered windows indicated the absence of its master, the Cardinal, then in Italy. But it was evident that the person who had arrived was expected, for before his servant could ring the hall bell the door opened, and a grave-looking domestic advanced with much deference, and awaited the presence of no less a personage than Monsignore Berwick.

‘We have had a rough passage, good Clifford,’ said the great man, alighting, ‘but I see you duly received my telegram. You are always ready.’

‘I hope my Lord will find it not uncom-

fortable,' said Clifford. 'I have prepared the little suite which you mentioned, and have been careful that there should be no outward sign of anyone having arrived.'

'And now,' said the Monsignore, stopping for a moment in the hall, 'here is a letter which must be instantly delivered and by a trusty hand,' and he gave it to Mr. Clifford, who, looking at the direction, nodded his head and said, 'By no one but myself. I will show my Lord to his rooms, and depart with this instantly.'

'And bring back a reply,' added the Monsignore.

The well-lit room, the cheerful fire, the judicious refection on a side table, were all circumstances which usually would have been agreeable to a wearied traveller, but Monsignore Berwick seemed little to regard them. Though a man in general superior to care and master of thought, his countenance was troubled and pensive even to dejection.

'Even the winds and waves are against



us,' he exclaimed, too restless to be seated, and walking up and down the room with his arms behind his back. 'That such a struggle should fall to my lot! Why was I not a minister in the days of the Gregorys, the Innocents, even the Leos! But this is craven. There should be inspiration in peril, and the greatest where peril is extreme. I am a little upset—with travel and the voyage and those telegrams not being answered. The good Clifford was wisely provident,' and he approached the table and took one glass of wine. 'Good! One must never despair in such a cause. And if the worse happens, it has happened before—and what then? Suppose Avignon over again, or even Gaeta, or even Paris? So long as we never relinquish our title to the Eternal City we shall be eternal. But then, some say, our enemies before were the sovereigns; now it is the people. Is it so? True we have vanquished kings and baffled emperors—but the French Republic and the Roman Republic have alike

reigned and ruled in the Vatican, and where are they? We have lost provinces, but we have also gained them. We have twelve millions of subjects in the United States of America, and they will increase like the sands of the sea. Still it is a hideous thing to have come back, as it were, to the days of the Constable of Bourbon, and to be contemplating the siege of the Holy See, and massacre and pillage and ineffable horrors! The Papacy may survive such calamities, as it undoubtedly will, but I shall scarcely figure in history if under my influence such visitations should accrue. If I had only to deal with men I would not admit of failure; but when your antagonists are human thoughts, represented by invisible powers, there is something that might baffle a Machiavel and appal a Borgia.'

While he was meditating in this vein the door opened, and Mr. Clifford with some hasty action and speaking rapidly exclaimed—

'He said he would be here sooner than

myself. His carriage was at the door. I drove back as fast as possible—and indeed I hear something now in the court,’ and he disappeared.

It was only to usher in, almost immediately, a stately personage in an evening dress, and wearing a decoration of a high class, who saluted the Monsignore with great cordiality.

‘I am engaged to dine with the Prussian Ambassador, who has been obliged to come to town to receive a prince of the blood who is visiting the dockyards here; but I thought you might be later than you expected, and I ordered my carriage to be in waiting, so that we have a good little hour—and I can come on to you again afterwards if that will not do.’

‘A little hour with us is a long hour with other people,’ said the Monsignore, ‘because we are friends and can speak without windings. You are a true friend to the Holy See; you have proved it. We are in great trouble and need of aid.’

‘I hear that things are not altogether as we could wish,’ said the gentleman in an evening dress; ‘but I hope, and should think, only annoyances.’

‘Dangers,’ said Berwick, ‘and great.’

‘How so?’

‘Well, we have invasion threatening us without and insurrection within,’ said Berwick. ‘We might, though it is doubtful, successfully encounter one of these perils, but their united action must be fatal.’

‘All this has come suddenly,’ said the gentleman. ‘In the summer you had no fear, and our people wrote to us that we might be perfectly tranquil.’

‘Just so,’ said Berwick. ‘If we had met a month ago I should have told you the same thing. A month ago the revolution seemed lifeless, penniless; without a future, without a resource. They had no money, no credit, no men. At present, quietly but regularly, they are assembling by thousands on our frontiers; they have to our knowledge received two large consignments

of small arms, and apparently have unlimited credit with the trade, both in Birmingham and Liége; they have even artillery; everything is paid for in coin or in good bills—and, worst of all, they have a man, the most consummate soldier in Europe. I thought he was at New York, and was in hopes he would never have recrossed the Atlantic—but I know that he passed through Florence a fortnight ago, and I have seen a man who says he spoke to him at Narni.’

‘The Italian government must stop all this,’ said the gentleman.

‘They do not stop it,’ said Berwick. ‘The government of his Holiness has made every representation to them: we have placed in their hands indubitable evidence of the illegal proceedings that are taking place and of the internal dangers we experience in consequence of their exterior movements. But they do nothing: it is even believed that the royal troops are joining the insurgents, and Garibaldi is

spouting with impunity in every balcony of Florence.'

'You may depend upon it that our government is making strong representations to the government of Florence.'

'I come from Paris and elsewhere,' said Berwick with animation and perhaps a degree of impatience. 'I have seen everybody there, and I have heard everything. It is not representations that are wanted from your government; it is something of a different kind.'

'But if you have seen everybody at Paris and heard everything, how can I help you?'

'By acting upon the government here. A word from you to the English Minister would have great weight at this juncture. Queen Victoria is interested in the maintenance of the Papal throne. Her Catholic subjects are counted by millions. The influence of his Holiness has been hitherto exercised against the Fenians. France would interfere if she was sure the step would not be disapproved by England.'

‘Interfere!’ said the gentleman. ‘Our return to Rome almost before we have paid our laundresses’ bills in the Eternal City would be a diplomatic scandal.’

‘A diplomatic scandal would be preferable to a European revolution.’

‘Suppose we were to have both?’ and the gentleman drew his chair near the fire.

‘I am convinced that a want of firmness now,’ said Berwick, ‘would lead to inconceivable calamities for all of us.’

‘Let us understand each other, my very dear friend Berwick,’ said his companion, and he threw his arm over the back of his chair and looked the Roman full in his face. ‘You say you have been at Paris and elsewhere, and have seen everybody and heard everything.’

‘Yes, yes.’

‘Something has happened to us also during the last month, and as unexpectedly as to yourselves.’

‘The secret societies? Yes, he spoke to me on that very point, and fully. ’Tis

strange, but is only, in my opinion, an additional argument in favour of crushing the evil influence.'

'Well, that he must decide. But the facts are startling. A month ago the secret societies in France were only a name; they existed only in the memory of the police, and almost as a tradition. At present we know that they are in complete organisation, and what is most strange is, that the prefects write they have information that the Mary-Anne associations, which are essentially republican and are scattered about the provinces, are all revived, and are astir. MARY-ANNE, as you know, was the red name for the Republic years ago, and there always was a sort of myth that these societies had been founded by a woman. Of course that is all nonsense, but they keep it up; it affects the public imagination, and my government has undoubted evidence that the word of command has gone round to all these societies that Mary-Anne has returned



and will issue her orders, which must be obeyed.'

'The Church is stronger, and especially in the provinces, than the Mary-Anne societies,' said Berwick.

'I hope so,' said his friend; 'but you see, my dear Monsignore, the question with us is not so simple as you put it. The secret societies will not tolerate another Roman interference, to say nothing of the diplomatic hubbub, which we might, if necessary, defy; but what if, taking advantage of the general indignation, your new kingdom of Italy may seize the golden opportunity of making a popular reputation, and declare herself the champion of national independence against the interference of the foreigner? My friend, we tread on delicate ground.'

'If Rome falls, not an existing dynasty in Europe will survive five years,' said Berwick.

'It may be so,' said his companion, but with no expression of incredulity. 'You

know how consistently and anxiously I have always laboured to support the authority of the Holy See, and to maintain its territorial position as the guarantee of its independence; but fate has decided against us. I cannot indulge in the belief that his Holiness will ever regain his lost provinces; a capital without a country is an apparent anomaly, which I fear will always embarrass us. We can treat the possession as the capital of Christendom, but, alas! all the world are not as good Christians as ourselves, and Christendom is a country no longer marked out in the map of the world. I wish,' continued the gentleman in a tone almost coaxing—'I wish we could devise some plan which, humanly speaking, would secure to his Holiness the possession of his earthly throne for ever. I wish I could induce you to consider more favourably that suggestion, that his Holiness should content himself with the ancient city, and, in possession of St. Peter's and the Vatican, leave the rest of Rome to

the vulgar cares and the mundane anxieties of the transient generation. 'Yes,' he added with energy, 'if, my dear Berwick, you could see your way to this, or something like this, I think even now and at once, I could venture to undertake that the Emperor, my master, would soon put an end to all these disturbances and dangers, and that——'

'Non possumus,' said Berwick, sternly stopping him, 'sooner than that Attila, the Constable of Bourbon, or the blasphemous orgies of the Red Republic! After all, it is the Church against the secret societies. They are the only two strong things in Europe, and will survive kings, emperors, or parliaments.'

At this moment there was a tap at the door, and, bidden to enter, Mr. Clifford presented himself with a sealed paper for the gentleman in evening dress. 'Your secretary, sir, brought this, which he said must be given you before you went to the Ambassador.'

‘’Tis well,’ said the gentleman, and he rose, and with a countenance of some excitement read the paper, which contained a telegram; and then he said, ‘This, I think, will help us out of our immediate difficulties, my dear Monsignore. Rattazzi has behaved like a man of sense and has arrested Garibaldi. But you do not seem, my friend, as pleased as I should have anticipated.’

‘Garibaldi has been arrested before,’ said Berwick.

‘Well, well, I am hopeful; but I must go to my dinner. I will see you again to-morrow.’

## CHAPTER XX.

THE continuous gathering of what, in popular language, were styled the Garibaldi Volunteers, on the southern border of the Papal territory in the autumn of 1867, was not the only or perhaps the greatest danger which then threatened the Holy See, though the one which most attracted its alarmed attention. The considerable numbers in which this assemblage was suddenly occurring; the fact that the son of the Liberator had already taken its command, and only as the precursor of his formidable sire; the accredited rumour that Ghirelli at the head of a purely Roman legion was daily expected to join the frontier force; that Nicotera was stirring in the old Neapolitan kingdom, while the Liberator himself at Florence and in other parts of

Tuscany was even ostentatiously, certainly with impunity, preaching the new crusade and using all his irresistible influence with the populace to excite their sympathies and to stimulate their energy, might well justify the extreme apprehension of the court of Rome. And yet dangers at least equal, and almost as close, were at the same time preparing unnoticed and unknown.

In the mountainous range between Fiascone and Viterbo, contiguous to the sea, is a valley surrounded by chains of steep and barren hills, but which is watered by a torrent scarcely dry even in summer; so that the valley itself, which is not inconsiderable in its breadth, is never without verdure, while almost a forest of brushwood formed of shrubs, which in England we should consider rare, bounds the natural turf and ascends sometimes to no inconsiderable height the nearest hills.

Into this valley, towards the middle of September, there defiled one afternoon

through a narrow pass a band of about fifty men, all armed, and conducting a cavalcade or rather a caravan of mules laden with munitions of war and other stores. When they had gained the centre of the valley and a general halt was accomplished, their commander, accompanied by one who was apparently an officer, surveyed all the points of the locality; and when their companions had rested and refreshed themselves, they gave the necessary orders for the preparation of a camp. The turf already afforded a sufficient area for their present wants, but it was announced that on the morrow they must commence clearing the brushwood. In the mean time, one of the liveliest scenes of military life soon rapidly developed itself: the canvass houses were pitched, the sentries appointed, the videttes established. The commissariat was limited to bread and olives and generally the running stream, varied sometimes by coffee and always consoled by tobacco.

On the third day, amidst their cheerful

though by no means light labours, a second caravan arrived, evidently expected and heartily welcomed. Then in another eight-and-forty hours, smaller bodies of men seemed to drop down from the hills, generally without stores, but always armed. Then men came from neighbouring islands in open boats, and one morning a considerable detachment crossed the water from Corsica. So that at the end of a week or ten days there was an armed force of several hundred men in this once silent valley, now a scene of constant stir and continual animation, for some one or something was always arriving, and from every quarter; men and arms and stores crept in from every wild pass of the mountains and every little rocky harbour of the coast.

About this time, while the officer in command was reviewing a considerable portion of the troops, the rest labouring in still clearing the brushwood and establishing the many works incidental to a



camp, half a dozen horsemen were seen descending the mountain pass by which the original body had entered the valley. A scout had preceded them, and the troops with enthusiasm awaited the arrival of that leader, a message from whose magic name had summoned them to this secluded rendezvous from many a distant state and city. Unruffled, but with an inspiring fire in his pleased keen eye, that General answered their devoted salute whom hitherto we have known by his travelling name of Captain Bruges.

It was only towards the end of the preceding month that he had resolved to take the field; but the organisation of the secret societies is so complete that he knew he could always almost instantly secure the assembling of a picked force in a particular place. The telegraph circulated its mystic messages to every part of France and Italy and Belgium, and to some old friends not so conveniently at hand, but who he doubted not would arrive in due

time for action. He himself had employed the interval in forwarding all necessary supplies, and he had passed through Florence in order that he might confer with the great spirit of Italian movement and plan with him the impending campaign.

After he had passed in review the troops, the General, with the officers of his staff who had accompanied him, visited on foot every part of the camp. Several of the men he recognised by name ; to all of them he addressed some inspiring word ; a memory of combats in which they had fought together, or happy allusions to adventures of romantic peril ; some question which indicated that local knowledge which is magical for those who are away from home ; mixed with all this, sharp, clear enquiries as to the business of the hour, which proved the master of detail, severe in discipline but never deficient in sympathy for his troops.

After sunset, enveloped in their cloaks, the General and his companions, the party

increased by the officers who had been in command previous to his arrival, smoked their cigars round the camp fire.

‘Well, Sarano,’ said the General, ‘I will look over your muster-roll to-morrow, but I should suppose I may count on a thousand rifles or so. I want three, and we shall get them. The great man would have supplied them me at once, but I will not have boys. He must send those on to Menotti. I told him, “I am not a man of genius ; I do not pretend to conquer kingdoms with boys. Give me old soldiers, men who have served a couple of campaigns, and been seasoned with four-and-twenty months of camp life, and I will not disgrace you or myself.”’

‘We have had no news from the other place for a long time,’ said Sarano. ‘How is it?’

‘Well enough. They are in the mountains about Nerola, in a position not very unlike this ; numerically strong, for Nicotera has joined them, and Ghirelli with the

Roman Legion is at hand. They must be quiet till the great man joins them ; I am told they are restless. There has been too much noise about the whole business. Had they been as mum as you have been, we should not have had all these representations from France and these threatened difficulties from that quarter. The Papalini would have complained and remonstrated, and Rattazzi could have conscientiously assured the people at Paris that they were dealing with exaggerations and bugbears; the very existence of the frontier force would have become a controversy, and while the newspapers were proving it was a myth we should have been in the Vatican.'

'And when shall we be there, General?'

'I do not want to move for a month. By that time I shall have two thousand five hundred or three thousand of my old comrades, and the great man will have put his boys in trim. Both bodies must leave their mountains at the same time, join in the open country and march to Rome.'

As the night advanced, several of the party rose and left the camp fire—some to their tents, some to their duties. Two of the staff remained with the General.

‘I am disappointed and uneasy that we have not heard from Paris,’ said one of them.

‘I am disappointed,’ said the General, ‘but not uneasy; she never makes a mistake.’

‘The risk was too great,’ rejoined the speaker in a depressed tone.

‘I do not see that,’ said the General. ‘What is the risk? Who could possibly suspect the lady’s maid of the Princess of Tivoli! I am told that the Princess has become quite a favourite at the Tuileries.’

‘They say that the police is not so well informed as it used to be; nevertheless, I confess I should be much happier were she sitting round this camp fire.’

‘Courage!’ said the General. ‘I do not believe in many things, but I do believe in

the divine Theodora. What say you, Captain Muriel? I hope you are not offended by my criticism of young soldiers. You are the youngest in our band, but you have good military stuff in you, and will be soon seasoned.'

'I feel I serve under a master of the art,' replied Lothair, 'and will not take the gloomy view of Colonel Campian about our best friend, though I share all his disappointment. It seems to me that detection is impossible. I am sure that I could not have recognised her when I handed the Princess into her carriage.'

'The step was absolutely necessary,' said the General; 'no one could be trusted but herself—no other person has the influence. All our danger is from France. The Italian troops will never cross the frontier to attack us, rest assured of that. I have proof of it. And it is most difficult, almost impossible, for the French to return. There never would have been an idea of such a step, if there had been a

little more discretion at Florence, less of those manifestoes and speeches from balconies. But we must not criticise one who is above criticism. Without him we could do nothing, and when he stamps his foot men rise from the earth. I will go the rounds; come with me, Captain Muriel. Colonel, I order you to your tent; you are a veteran—the only one among us, at least on the staff, who was wounded at Aspromonte.’

## CHAPTER XXI.

THE life of Lothair had been so strange and exciting since he quitted Muriel Towers that he had found little time for that reflection in which he was once so prone to indulge. Perhaps he shrank from it. If he wanted an easy distraction from self-criticism—it may be a convenient refuge from the scruples, or even the pangs, of conscience—it was profusely supplied by the startling affairs of which he formed a part, the singular characters with whom he was placed in contact, the risk and responsibility which seemed suddenly to have encompassed him with their ever-stimulating influence, and, lastly, by the novelty of foreign travel, which even under ordinary circumstances has a tendency to rouse and stir up even ordinary men.



So long as Theodora was his companion in their councils and he was listening to her deep plans and daring suggestions, enforced by that calm enthusiasm which was not the least powerful of her commanding spells, it is not perhaps surprising that he should have yielded without an effort to her bewitching ascendancy. But when they had separated, and she had embarked on that perilous enterprise of personally conferring with the chiefs of those secret societies of France which had been fancifully baptised by her popular name and had nurtured her tradition as a religious faith, it might have been supposed that Lothair, left to himself, might have recurred to the earlier sentiments of his youth. But he was not left to himself. He was left with her injunctions, and the spirit of the oracle, though the divinity was no longer visible, pervaded his mind and life.

Lothair was to accompany the General as one of his aides-de-camp, and he was to meet Theodora again on what was contem-

plated as the field of memorable actions. Theodora had wisely calculated on the influence, beneficial in her view, which the character of a man like the General would exercise over Lothair. This consummate military leader, though he had pursued a daring career and was a man of strong convictions, was distinguished by an almost unerring judgment and a mastery of method rarely surpassed. Though he was without imagination or sentiment there were occasions on which he had shown he was not deficient in a becoming sympathy, and he had a rapid and correct perception of character. He was a thoroughly honest man, and in the course of a life of great trial and vicissitude even envenomed foes had never impeached his pure integrity. For the rest, he was unselfish, but severe in discipline, inflexible, and even ruthless in the fulfilment of his purpose. A certain simplicity of speech and conduct, and a disinterestedness which even in little things was constantly exhibiting itself, gave to his character

even charm, and rendered personal intercourse with him highly agreeable.

In the countless arrangements which had to be made, Lothair was never wearied in recognising and admiring the prescience and precision of his chief; and when the day had died, and for a moment they had ceased from their labours, or were travelling together, often through the night, Lothair found in the conversation of his companion, artless and unrestrained, a wonderful fund of knowledge both of men and things, and that, too, in very different climes and countries.

The camp in the Apennines was not favourable to useless reverie. Lothair found unceasing and deeply interesting occupation in his numerous and novel duties, and if his thoughts for a moment wandered beyond the barren peaks around him they were attracted and engrossed by one subject—and that was, naturally, Theodora. From her they had heard nothing since her departure, except a mysterious though not

discouraging telegram which was given to them by Colonel Campian when he had joined them at Florence. It was difficult not to feel anxious about her, though the General would never admit the possibility of her personal danger.

In this state of affairs, a week having elapsed since his arrival at the camp, Lothair, who had been visiting the outposts, was summoned one morning by an orderly to the tent of the General. That personage was on his legs when Lothair entered it, and was dictating to an officer writing at a table.

‘You ought to know my military secretary,’ said the General as Lothair entered, ‘and therefore I will introduce you.’

Lothair was commencing a suitable reverence of recognition as the secretary raised his head to receive it, when he suddenly stopped, changed colour, and for a moment seemed to lose himself, and then murmured, ‘Is it possible?’

It was indeed Theodora: clothed in male attire she seemed a stripling.

‘Quite possible,’ she said, ‘and all is well. But I found it a longer business than I had counted on. You see, there are so many new persons who knew me only by tradition, but with whom it was necessary I should personally confer. And I had more difficulty, just now, in getting through Florence than I had anticipated. The Papalini and the French are both worrying our allies in that city about the gathering on the southern frontier, and there is a sort of examination, true or false I will not aver, of all who depart. However, I managed to pass with some soldiers’ wives who were carrying fruit as far as Narni, and there I met an old comrade of Aspromonte, who is a custom-officer now, but true to the good cause, and he, and his daughter who is with me, helped me through everything, and so I am with my dear friends again.’

After some slight conversation in this

vein Theodora entered into a detailed narrative of her proceedings, and gave to them her views of the condition of affairs.

‘By one thing, above all others,’ she said, ‘I am impressed, and that is the unprecedented efforts which Rome is making to obtain the return of the French. There never was such influence exercised, such distinct offers made, such prospects intimated. You may prepare yourself for anything; a papal coronation, a family pontiff—I could hardly say a king of Rome, though he has been reminded of that royal fact. Our friends have acted with equal energy and with perfect temper. The heads of the societies have met in council, and resolved that if France will refuse to interfere no domestic disturbance shall be attempted during this reign, and they have communicated this resolution to head-quarters. He trusts them; he knows they are honest men. They did something like this before the Italian war, when he hesitated about heading the army from the

fear of domestic revolution. Anxious to recover the freedom of Italy, they apprised him that if he personally entered the field they would undertake to ensure tranquillity at home. The engagement was scrupulously fulfilled. When I left Paris all looked well, but affairs require the utmost vigilance and courage. It is a mighty struggle ; it is a struggle between the Church and the secret societies ; and it is a death struggle.'

## CHAPTER XXII.

DURING the week that elapsed after the arrival of Theodora at the camp, many recruits and considerable supplies of military stores reached the valley. Theodora really acted as secretary to the General, and her labours were not light. Though Lothair was frequently in her presence, they were never or rarely alone, and when they conversed together her talk was of details. The scouts, too, had brought information, which might have been expected, that their rendezvous was no longer a secret at Rome. The garrison of the neighbouring town of Viterbo had therefore been increased, and there was even the commencement of an entrenched camp in the vicinity of that place, to be garrisoned by a detachment of the legion of



Antibes and other good troops, so that any junction between the General and Garibaldi, if contemplated, should not be easily effected.

In the meantime, the life of the camp was busy. The daily drill and exercise of two thousand men was not a slight affair, and the constant changes in orders which the arrival of bodies of recruits occasioned rendered this primary duty more difficult; the office of quarter-master required the utmost resource and temper; the commissariat, which from the nature of the country could depend little upon forage, demanded extreme husbandry and forbearance. But perhaps no labours were more severe than those of the armourers, the clink of whose instruments resounded unceasingly in the valley. And yet such is the magic of method, when directed by a master mind, that the whole went on with the regularity and precision of machinery. More than two thousand armed men, all of whom had been accustomed to

an irregular, some to a lawless life, were as docile as children; animated, in general, by what they deemed a sacred cause, and led by a chief whom they universally alike adored and feared.

Among these wild warriors, Theodora, delicate and fragile, but with a mien of majesty, moved like the spirit of some other world, and was viewed by them with admiration not unmixed with awe. Veterans round the camp fire had told to the new recruits her deeds of prowess and devotion; how triumphantly she had charged at Voltorno, and how heroically she had borne their standard when they were betrayed at fatal Aspromonte.

The sun had sunk behind the mountains, but was still high in the western heaven, when a mounted lancer was observed descending a distant pass into the valley. The General and his staff had not long commenced their principal meal of the day, of which the disappearance of the sun behind the peak was the accustomed signal.

This permitted them, without inconvenience, to take their simple repast in the open, but still warm, air. Theodora was seated between the General and her husband, and her eye was the first that caught the figure of the distant but descending stranger.

‘What is that?’ she asked.

The General immediately using his telescope, after a moment’s examination, said—

‘A lancer of the Royal Guard.’

All eyes were now fixed upon the movements of the horseman. He had descended the winding steep and now was tracking the craggy path which led into the plain. As he reached the precinct of the camp he was challenged but not detained. Nearer and nearer he approached, and it was evident from his uniform that the conjecture of his character by the General was correct.

‘A deserter from the Guard,’ whispered Colonel Campian to Lothair.

The horseman was conducted by an officer to the presence of the commander.

When that presence was reached the lancer, still silent, slowly lowered his tall weapon and offered the General the despatch which was fastened to the head of his spear.

Every eye was on the countenance of their chief as he perused the missive, but that countenance was always inscrutable. It was observed, however, that he read the paper twice. Looking up, the General said to the officer: 'See that the bearer is well quartered. This is for you,' he added in a low voice to Theodora, and he gave her an enclosure; 'read it quietly, and then come into my tent.'

Theodora read the letter, and quietly; though, without the preparatory hint, it might have been difficult to have concealed her emotion. Then, after a short pause, she rose, and the General, requesting his companions not to disturb themselves, joined her, and they proceeded in silence to his tent.

'He is arrested,' said the General when they had entered it, 'and taken to Alessan-

dria, where he is a close prisoner. 'Tis a blow, but I am more grieved than surprised.'

This was the arrest of Garibaldi at Sini-gaglia by the Italian government, which had been communicated at Hexham House to Monsignore Berwick by his evening visitor.

'How will it affect operations in the field?' enquired Theodora.

'According to this despatch, in no degree. Our original plan is to be pursued, and acted upon the moment we are ready. That should be in a fortnight, or perhaps three weeks. Menotti is to take the command on the southern frontier. Well, it may prevent jealousies. I think I shall send Sarano there to reconnoitre; he is well both with Nicotera and Ghirelli, and may keep things straight.'

'But there are other affairs besides operations in the field,' said Theodora, 'and scarcely less critical. Read this,' and she gave him the enclosure, which ran in these words:—

‘The General will tell thee what has happened. Have no fear for that. All will go right. It will not alter our plans a bunch of grapes. Be perfectly easy about this country. No Italian soldier will ever cross the frontier except to combat the French. Write that on thy heart. Are other things as well? other places? My advices are bad. All the prelates are on their knees to him—with blessings on their lips and curses in their pockets. Archbishop of Paris is as bad as any. Berwick is at Biarritz—an inexhaustible intriguer; the only priest I fear. I hear from one who never misled me that the Polhes brigade has orders to be in readiness. The MARY-ANNE societies are not strong enough for the situation—too local; he listens to them, but he has given no pledge. We must go deeper. ’Tis an affair of “MADRE NATURA.” Thou must see Colonna.’

‘Colonna is at Rome,’ said the General, ‘and cannot be spared. He is acting President of the National Committee, and has enough upon his hands.’

‘I must see him,’ said Theodora.

‘I had hoped I had heard the last of the “Madre Natura,” said the General with an air of discontent.

‘And the Neapolitans hope they have heard the last of the eruptions of their mountain,’ said Theodora; ‘but the necessities of things are sterner stuff than the hopes of men.’

‘Its last effort appalled and outraged Europe,’ said the General.

‘Its last effort forced the French into Italy, and has freed the country from the Alps to the Adriatic,’ rejoined Theodora.

‘If the great man had only been as quiet as we have been,’ said the General, lighting a cigar, ‘we might have been in Rome by this time.’

‘If the great man had been quiet, we should not have had a volunteer in our valley,’ said Theodora. ‘My faith in him is implicit; he has been right in everything, and has never failed except when he has been betrayed. I see no hope for Rome

except in his convictions and energy. I do not wish to die and feel I have devoted my life only to secure the triumph of Savoyards who have sold their own country, and of priests whose impostures have degraded mine.'

'Ah! those priests!' exclaimed the General. 'I really do not much care for anything else. They say the Savoyard is not a bad comrade, and at any rate he can charge like a soldier. But those priests! I fluttered them once! Why did I spare any? Why did I not burn down St. Peter's? I proposed it, but Mirandola, with his history and his love of art and all that old furniture, would reserve it for a temple of the true God and for the glory of Europe! Fine results we have accomplished! And now we are here, hardly knowing where we are, and, as it appears, hardly knowing what to do.'

'Not so, dear General,' said Theodora. 'Where we are is the threshold of Rome, and if we are wise we shall soon cross it.



This arrest of our great friend is a misfortune, but not an irredeemable one. I thoroughly credit what he says about the Italian troops. Rest assured he knows what he is talking about: they will never cross the frontier against us. The danger is from another land. But there will be no peril if we are prompt and firm. Clear your mind of all these dark feelings about the MADRE NATURA. All that we require is that the most powerful and the most secret association in Europe should ratify what the local societies of France have already intimated. It will be enough. Send for Colonna, and leave the rest to me.'

## CHAPTER XXIII.

THE 'MADRE NATURA' is the oldest, the most powerful, and the most occult of the secret societies of Italy. Its mythic origin reaches the era of paganism, and it is not impossible that it may have been founded by some of the despoiled professors of the ancient faith. As time advanced, the brotherhood assumed many outward forms, according to the varying spirit of the age: sometimes they were freemasons, sometimes they were soldiers, sometimes artists, sometimes men of letters. But whether their external representation were a lodge, a commandery, a studio, or an academy, their inward purpose was ever the same; and that was to cherish the memory, and, if possible, to secure the restoration, of the Roman republic, and to expel from the

Aryan settlement of Romulus the creeds and sovereignty of what they styled the Semitic invasion.

The 'MADRE NATURA' have a tradition that one of the most celebrated of the Popes was admitted to their fraternity as Cardinal dei Medici, and that when he ascended the throne, mainly through their labours, he was called upon to co-operate in the fulfilment of the great idea. An individual who in his youth has been the member of a secret society, and subsequently ascends a throne, may find himself in an embarrassing position. This, however, according to the tradition, which there is some documentary ground to accredit, was not the perplexing lot of his Holiness, Pope Leo X. His tastes and convictions were in entire unison with his early engagements, and it is believed that he took an early and no unwilling opportunity of submitting to the conclave a proposition to consider whether it were not both expedient and practicable to return to the

ancient faith, for which their temples had been originally erected.

The chief tenet of the society of 'MADRE NATURA' is denoted by its name. They could conceive nothing more benignant and more beautiful, more provident and more powerful, more essentially divine, than that system of creative order to which they owed their being, and in which it was their privilege to exist. But they differed from other schools of philosophy that have held this faith in this singular particular : they recognised the inability of the Latin race to pursue the worship of nature in an abstract spirit, and they desired to revive those exquisite personifications of the abounding qualities of the mighty mother which the Aryan genius had bequeathed to the admiration of man. Parthenope was again to rule at Naples instead of Januarius, and starveling saints and winking madonnas were to restore their usurped altars to the god of

the silver bow and the radiant daughter of the foaming wave.

Although the society of 'MADRE NATURA' themselves accepted the allegorical interpretation which the Neo-Platonists had placed upon the Pagan creeds during the first ages of Christianity, they could not suppose that the populace could ever comprehend an exposition so refined, not to say so fanciful. They guarded, therefore, against the corruptions and abuses of the religion of nature by the entire abolition of the priestly order, and in the principle that every man should be his own priest they believed they had found the necessary security.

As it was evident that the arrest of Garibaldi could not be kept secret, the General thought it most prudent to be himself the herald of its occurrence, which he announced to the troops in a manner as little discouraging as he could devise. It was difficult to extenuate the consequences of so great a blow, but they were assured

that it was not a catastrophe, and would not in the slightest degree affect the execution of the plans previously resolved on. Two or three days later some increase of confidence was occasioned by the authentic intelligence that Garibaldi had been removed from his stern imprisonment at Alessandria, and conveyed to his island-home, Caprera, though still a prisoner.

About this time, the General said to Lothair, 'My secretary has occasion to go on an expedition. I shall send a small detachment of cavalry with her, and you will be at its head. She has requested that her husband should have this office, but that is impossible; I cannot spare my best officer. It is your first command, and though I hope it will involve no great difficulty, there is no command that does not require courage and discretion. The distance is not very great, and so long as you are in the mountains you will probably be safe; but in leaving this range and gaining the southern Apennines, which is your point or

arrival, you will have to cross the open country. I do not hear the Papalini are in force there; I believe they have concentrated themselves at Rome, and about Viterbo. If you meet any scouts and reconnoitring parties, you will be able to give a good account of them, and probably they will be as little anxious to encounter you as you to meet them. But we must be prepared for everything, and you may be threatened by the enemy in force; in that case you will cross the Italian frontier, in the immediate neighbourhood of which you will keep during the passage of the open country, and surrender yourselves and your arms to the authorities. They will not be very severe; but at whatever cost and whatever may be the odds, Theodora must never be a prisoner to the Papalini. You will depart to-morrow at dawn.'

There is nothing so animating, so invigorating alike to body and soul, so truly delicious, as travelling among mountains in

the early hours of the day. The freshness of nature falls upon a responsive frame, and the nobility of the scene discards the petty thoughts that pester ordinary life. So felt Captain Muriel, as with every military precaution he conducted his little troop and his precious charge among the winding passes of the Apennines; at first dim in the matin twilight, then soft with incipient day, then coruscating with golden flashes. Sometimes they descended from the austere heights into the sylvan intricacies of chestnut forests, amid the rush of waters and the fragrant stir of ancient trees; and then again ascending to lofty summits, ranges of interminable hills, grey or green, expanded before them, with ever and anon a glimpse of plains, and sometimes the splendour and the odour of the sea.

Theodora rode a mule, which had been presented to the General by some admirer. It was an animal of remarkable beauty and intelligence, perfectly aware, apparently, of the importance of its present trust, and



proud of its rich accoutrements, its padded saddle of crimson velvet, and its silver bells. A couple of troopers formed the advanced guard, and the same number at a certain distance furnished the rear. The body of the detachment, fifteen strong, with the sumpter mules, generally followed Theodora, by whose side, whenever the way permitted, rode their commander. Since he left England Lothair had never been so much alone with Theodora. What struck him most now, as indeed previously at the camp, was that she never alluded to the past. For her there would seem to be no Muriel Towers, no Belmont, no England. You would have supposed that she had been born in the Apennines and had never quitted them. All her conversation was details, political or military. Not that her manner was changed to Lothair. It was not only as kind as before, but it was sometimes unusually and even unnecessarily tender, as if she reproached herself for the too frequent and too evident self-engross-

ment of her thoughts, and wished to intimate to him that though her brain were absorbed, her heart was still gentle and true.

Two hours after noon they halted in a green nook, near a beautiful cascade that descended in a mist down a sylvan cleft, and poured its pellucid stream, for their delightful use, into a natural basin of marble. The men picketted their horses, and their corporal, who was a man of the country and their guide, distributed their rations. All vied with each other in administering to the comfort and convenience of Theodora, and Lothair hovered about her as a bee about a flower, but she was silent, which he wished to impute to fatigue. But she said she was not at all fatigued, indeed quite fresh. Before they resumed their journey he could not refrain from observing on the beauty of their resting-place. She assented with a pleasing nod, and then resuming her accustomed abstraction she said—‘The more I think, the more I am

convinced that the battle is not to be fought in this country, but in France.'

After one more ascent, and that comparatively a gentle one, it was evident that they were gradually emerging from the mountainous region. Their course since their halting lay through a spur of the chief chain they had hitherto pursued, and a little after sunset they arrived at a farm-house, which the corporal informed his Captain was the intended quarter of Theodora for the night, as the horses could proceed no farther without rest. At dawn they were to resume their way, and soon to cross the open country, where danger, if any, was to be anticipated.

The farmer was frightened when he was summoned from his house by a party of armed men; but having some good ducats given him in advance, and being assured they were all Christians, he took heart and laboured to do what they desired. Theodora duly found herself in becoming quarters, and a sentry was mounted at her

residence. The troopers, who had been quite content to wrap themselves in their cloaks and pass the night in the air, were pleased to find no despicable accommodation in the out-buildings of the farm, and still more with the proffered vintage of their host. As for Lothair, he enveloped himself in his mantle and threw himself on a bed of sacks, with a truss of Indian corn for his pillow, and though he began by musing over Theodora, in a few minutes he was immersed in that profound and dreamless sleep which a life of action and mountain air combined can alone secure.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

THE open country extending from the Apennines to the very gates of Rome, and which they had now to cross, was in general a desert; a plain clothed with a coarse vegetation, and undulating with an interminable series of low and uncouth mounds, without any of the grace of form which always attends the disposition of nature. Nature had not created them. They were the offspring of man and time, and of their rival powers of destruction. Ages of civilisation were engulfed in this drear expanse. They were the tombs of empires and the sepulchres of contending races. The Campagna proper has at least the grace of aqueducts to break its monotony, and everywhere the cerulean spell of distance; but in this grim

solitude antiquity has left only the memory of its violence and crimes, and nothing is beautiful except the sky.

The orders of the General to direct their course as much as possible in the vicinity of the Italian frontier, though it lengthened their journey, somewhat mitigated its dreariness, and an hour after noon, after traversing some flinty fields, they observed in the distance an olive wood, beneath the pale shade of which, and among whose twisted branches and contorted roots, they had contemplated finding a halting-place. But here the advanced guard observed already an encampment, and one of them rode back to report the discovery.

A needless alarm; for after a due reconnaissance, they were ascertained to be friends—a band of patriots about to join the General in his encampment among the mountains. They reported that a division of the Italian army was assembled in force upon the frontier, but that several regiments had already signified to their com-

manders that they would not fight against Garibaldi or his friends. They confirmed also the news that the great leader himself was a prisoner at Caprera ; that although his son Menotti by his command had withdrawn from Nerola, his force was really increased by the junction of Ghirelli and the Roman legion, twelve hundred strong, and that five hundred riflemen would join the General in the course of the week.

A little before sunset they had completed the passage of the open country, and had entered the opposite branch of the Apennines, which they had long observed in the distance. After wandering among some rocky ground, they entered a defile amid hills covered with ilex, and thence emerging found themselves in a valley of some expanse and considerable cultivation ; bright crops, vineyards in which the vine was married to the elm, orchards full of fruit, and groves of olive ; in the distance blue hills that were becoming dark in the twilight, and in the centre of the plain, upon

a gentle and wooded elevation, a vast pile of building, the exact character of which at this hour it was difficult to recognise, for even as Theodora mentioned to Lothair that they now beheld the object of their journey the twilight seemed to vanish and the stars glistened in the dark heavens.

Though the building seemed so near, it was yet a considerable time before they reached the wooded hill, and though its ascent was easy, it was night before they halted in face of a huge gate flanked by high stone walls. A single light in one of the windows of the vast pile which it enclosed was the only evidence of human habitation.

The corporal sounded a bugle, and immediately the light moved and noises were heard—the opening of the hall doors, and then the sudden flame of torches, and the advent of many feet. The great gate slowly opened, and a steward and several serving men appeared. The steward addressed Theodora and Lothair, and invited them to



dismount and enter what now appeared to be a garden with statues and terraces and fountains and rows of cypress, its infinite dilapidation not being recognisable in the deceptive hour; and he informed the escort that their quarters were prepared for them, to which they were at once attended. Guiding their Captain and his charge, they soon approached a double flight of steps, and ascending, reached the main terrace from which the building immediately rose. It was, in truth, a castle of the middle ages, on which a Roman prince, at the commencement of the last century, had engrafted the character of one of those vast and ornate villas then the mode, but its original character still asserted itself, and notwithstanding its Tuscan basement and its Ionic pilasters, its rich pediments and delicate volutes, in the distant landscape it still seemed a fortress in the commanding position which became the residence of a feudal chief.

They entered through a Palladian vesti-

bule a hall which they felt must be of huge dimensions, though with the aid of a single torch it was impossible to trace its limits, either of extent or of elevation. Then bowing before them, and lighting as it were their immediate steps, the steward guided them down a long and lofty corridor, which led to the entrance of several chambers, all vast, with little furniture, but their walls covered with pictures. At length he opened a door and ushered them into a saloon, which was in itself bright and glowing, but of which the lively air was heightened by its contrast with the preceding scene. It was lofty, and hung with faded satin in gilded panels still bright. An ancient chandelier of Venetian crystal hung illumined from the painted ceiling, and on the silver dogs of the marble hearth a fresh block of cedar had just been thrown and blazed with aromatic light.

A lady came forward and embraced Theodora, and then greeted Lothair with cordiality. ‘We must dine to-day even later

than you do in London,' said the Princess of Tivoli, 'but we have been expecting you these two hours.' Then she drew Theodora aside, and said, 'He is here ; but you must be tired, my best beloved. As some wise man said : " Business to-morrow." '

'No, no,' said Theodora ; 'now, now—I am never tired. The only thing that exhausts me is suspense.'

'It shall be so. At present I will take you away to shake the dust off your armour ; and Serafino attend to Captain Muriel.'

## CHAPTER XXV.

WHEN they assembled again in the saloon there was an addition to their party in the person of a gentleman of distinguished appearance. His age could hardly have much exceeded that of thirty, but time had agitated his truly Roman countenance, one which we now find only in consular and imperial busts, or in the chance visage of a Roman shepherd or a Neapolitan bandit. He was a shade above the middle height, with a frame of well-knit symmetry. His proud head was proudly placed on broad shoulders, and neither time nor indulgence had marred his slender waist. His dark brown hair was short and hyacinthine, close to his white forehead, and naturally showing his small ears. He wore no

whiskers, and his moustache was limited to the centre of his upper lip.

When Theodora entered and offered him her hand he pressed it to his lips with gravity and proud homage, and then their hostess said, 'Captain Muriel, let me present you to a Prince who will not bear his titles, and whom, therefore, I must call by his name—Romolo Colonna.'

The large folding doors, richly painted and gilt, though dim from neglect and time, and sustained by columns of precious marbles, were suddenly opened and revealed another saloon, in which was a round table brightly lighted, and to which the Princess invited her friends.

Their conversation at dinner was lively and sustained; the travels of the last two days formed a natural part and were apposite to commence with, but they were soon engrossed in the great subject of their lives; and Colonna, who had left Rome only four-and-twenty hours, gave them interesting details of the critical condition of that capital. When the repast was con-

cluded the Princess rose, and, accompanied by Lothair, re-entered the saloon, but Theodora and Colonna lingered behind, and finally seating themselves at the farthest end of the apartment in which they had dined became engaged in earnest conversation.

‘You have seen a great deal since we first met at Belmont,’ said the Princess to Lothair.

‘It seems to me now,’ said Lothair, ‘that I knew as much of life then as I did of the stars above us, about whose purposes and fortunes I used to puzzle myself.’

‘And might have remained in that ignorance. The great majority of men exist but do not live—like Italy in the last century. The power of the passions, the force of the will, the creative energy of the imagination—these make life, and reveal to us a world of which the million are entirely ignorant. You have been fortunate in your youth to have become acquainted with a great woman. It develops

all a man's powers, and gives him a thousand talents.'

'I often think,' said Lothair, 'that I have neither powers nor talents, but am drifting without an orbit.'

'Into infinite space,' said the Princess. 'Well, one might do worse than that. But it is not so. In the long run your nature will prevail, and you will fulfil your organic purpose; but you will accomplish your ends with a completeness which can only be secured by the culture and development you are now experiencing.'

'And what is my nature?' said Lothair. 'I wish you would tell me.'

'Has not the divine Theodora told you?'

'She has told me many things, but not that.'

'How then could I know,' said the Princess, 'if she has not discovered it?'

'But perhaps she has discovered it,' said Lothair.

'Oh! then she would tell you,' said the Princess, 'for she is the soul of truth.'

‘But she is also the soul of kindness, and she might wish to spare my feelings.’

‘Well, that is very modest, and I dare say not affected. For there is no man, however gifted, even however conceited, who has any real confidence in himself until he has acted.’

‘Well, we shall soon act,’ said Lothair, ‘and then I suppose I shall know my nature.’

‘In time,’ said the Princess, ‘and with the continued inspiration of friendship.’

‘But you too are a great friend of Theodora?’

‘Although a woman. I see you are laughing at female friendships, and, generally speaking, there is foundation for the general sneer. I will own, for my part, I have every female weakness, and in excess. I am vain, I am curious, I am jealous, and I am envious; but I adore Theodora. I reconcile my feelings towards her and my disposition in this way. It is not friendship—it is worship. And indeed there are



moments when I sometimes think she is one of those beautiful divinities that we once worshipped in this land, and who, when they listened to our prayers, at least vouchsafed that our country should not be the terrible wilderness that you crossed this day.'

In the meantime Colonna, with folded arms and eyes fixed on the ground, was listening to Theodora.

'Thus you see,' she continued, 'it comes to this—Rome can only be freed by the Romans. He looks upon the secret societies of his own country as he does upon universal suffrage—a wild beast, and dangerous, but which may be watched and tamed and managed by the police. He listens, but he plays with them. He temporises. At the bottom of his heart, his Italian blood despises the Gauls. It must be something deeper and more touching than this. Rome must appeal to him, and in the ineffable name.'

'It has been uttered before,' said Co-

lonna, looking up at his companion, 'and——' And he hesitated.

'And in vain you would say,' said Theodora. 'Not so. There was a martyrdom, but the blood of Felice baptised the new birth of Italian life. But I am not thinking of bloodshed. Had it not been for the double intrigues of the Savoyards it need not then have been shed. We bear him no ill will—at least not now—and we can make great offers. Make them. The revolution in Gaul is ever a mimicry of Italian thought and life. Their great affair of the last century, which they have so marred and muddled, would never have occurred had it not been for Tuscan reform; 1848 was the echo of our societies; and the Seine will never be disturbed if the Tiber flows unruffled. Let him consent to Roman freedom, and MADRE NATURA will guarantee him against Lutetian barricades.'

'It is only the offer of Mary-Anne in another form,' said Colonna.

‘Guarantee the dynasty,’ said Theodora. ‘There is the point. He can trust us. Emperors and kings break treaties without remorse, but he knows that what is registered by the most ancient power in the world is sacred.’

‘Can republicans guarantee dynasties?’ said Colonna, shaking his head.

‘Why what is a dynasty, when we are dealing with eternal things? The casualties of life compared with infinite space. Rome is eternal. Centuries of the most degrading and foreign priestcraft—enervating rites brought in by Heliogabalus and the Syrian emperors—have failed to destroy her. Dynasties! Why, even in our dark servitude we have seen Merovingian and Carlovingian kings, and Capets and Valois and Bourbons and now Buonapartes. They have disappeared, and will disappear like Orgetorix and the dynasties of the time of Cæsar. What we want is Rome free. Do not you see that everything has been preparing for that event? This monstrous

masquerade of United Italy — what is it but an initiatory ceremony to prove that Italy without Rome is a series of provinces? Establish the Roman republic, and the Roman race will, as before, conquer them in detail. And when the Italians are thus really united, what will become of the Gauls? Why, the first Buonaparte said that if Italy were really united the Gauls would have no chance. And he was a good judge of such things.'

'What would you have me do then?' said Colonna.

'See him—see him at once. Say everything that I have said, and say it better. His disposition is with us. Convenience, all political propriety, counsel and would justify his abstinence. A return to Rome would seem weak, fitful, capricious, and would prove that his previous retirement was ill-considered and ill-informed. It would disturb and alarm Europe. But you have, nevertheless, to fight against great odds. It is MADRE NATURA against ST. PETER'S.

Never was the abomination of the world so active as at present. It is in the very throes of its fell despair. To save itself, it would poison in the Eucharist.'

'And if I fail?' said Colonna.

'You will not fail. On the whole his interest lies on our side.'

'The sacerdotal influences are very strong there. When the calculation of interest is fine, a word, a glance, sometimes a sigh, a tear, may have a fatal effect.'

'All depends upon him,' said Theodora. 'If he were to disappear from the stage, interference would be impossible.'

'But he is on the stage, and apparently will remain.'

'A single life should not stand between Rome and freedom.'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean that Romolo Colonna should go to Paris and free his country.'

## CHAPTER XXVI.

WHEN Captain Muriel and his detachment returned to the camp, they found that the force had been not inconsiderably increased in their absence, while the tidings of the disposition of the Italian army, brought by the recruits and the deserters from the royal standard, cherished the hopes of the troops, and stimulated their desire for action. Theodora had been far more communicative during their journey back than in that of her departure. She was less absorbed, and had resumed that serene yet even sympathising character which was one of her charms. Without going into detail, she mentioned more than once to Lothair how relieved she felt by Colonna accepting the mission to Paris. He was a person of so much influence, she said, and

of such great judgment and resource. She augured the most satisfactory results from his presence on the main scene of action.

Time passed rapidly at the camp. When a life of constant activity is combined with routine, the hours fly. Neither letter nor telegram arrived from Colonna, and neither was expected; and yet Theodora heard from him, and even favourably. One day, as she was going the rounds with her husband, a young soldier, a new recruit, approached her, and pressing to his lips a branch of the olive tree, presented it to her. On another occasion when she returned to her tent, she found a bunch of fruit from the same tree, though not quite ripe, which showed that the cause of peace had not only progressed but had almost matured. All these communications sustained her sanguine disposition, and full of happy confidence she laboured with unceasing and inspiring energy, so that when the looked-for signal came they might be

prepared to obey it, and rapidly gather the rich fruition of their glorious hopes.

While she was in this mood of mind a scout arrived from Nerola, bringing news that a brigade of the French army had positively embarked at Marseilles, and might be hourly expected at Civita Vecchia. The news was absolute. The Italian Consul at Marseilles had telegraphed to his government both when the first regiment was on board, and when the last had embarked. Copies of these telegrams had been forwarded instantly by a secret friend to the volunteers on the southern frontier.

When Theodora heard this news she said nothing, but, turning pale, she quitted the group round the General and hastened to her own tent. She told her attendant, the daughter of the custom-house officer at Narni, and a true child of the mountains, that no one must approach her, not even Colonel Campian, and the girl sate without the tent at its entrance, dressed in her many coloured garments, with fiery eyes



and square white teeth, and her dark hair braided with gold coins and covered with a long white kerchief of perfect cleanliness; and she had a poniard at her side and a revolver in her hand, and she would have used both weapons sooner than that her mistress should be disobeyed.

Alone in her tent, Theodora fell upon her knees, and lifting up her hands to heaven and bowing her head to the earth, she said: 'O God! whom I have ever worshipped, God of justice and of truth, receive the agony of my soul!'

And on the earth she remained for hours in despair.

Night came and it brought no solace, and the day returned, but to her it brought no light. Theodora was no longer seen. The soul of the camp seemed extinct. The mien of majesty that ennobled all; the winning smile that rewarded the rifleman at his practice and the sapper at his toil; the inciting word that reanimated the recruit and recalled to the veteran the

glories of Sicilian struggles—all vanished—all seemed spiritless and dull, and the armourer clinked his forge as if he were the heartless hireling of a king.

In this state of moral discomfiture there was one person who did not lose his head, and this was the General. Calm, collected, and critical, he surveyed the situation and indicated the possible contingencies. ‘Our best, if not our only, chance,’ he said to Colonel Campian, ‘is this—that the Italian army now gathered in force upon the frontier should march to Rome and arrive there before the French. Whatever then happens, we shall at least get rid of the great imposture, but in all probability the French and Italians will fight. In that case I shall join the Savoyards, and in the confusion we may do some business yet.’

‘This embarkation,’ said the Colonel, ‘explains the gathering of the Italians on the frontier. They must have foreseen this event at Florence. They never can submit to another French occupation. It

would upset their throne. The question is, who will be at Rome first.'

'Just so,' said the General; 'and as it is an affair upon which all depends, and is entirely beyond my control, I think I shall now take a nap.' So saying he turned into his tent, and, in five minutes, this brave and exact man, but in whom the muscular development far exceeded the nervous, was slumbering without a dream.

Civita Vecchia was so near at hand, and the scouts of the General were so numerous and able, that he soon learnt the French had not yet arrived, and another day elapsed and still no news of the French. But, on the afternoon of the following day, the startling but authentic information arrived, that, after the French army having embarked and remained two days in port, the original orders had been countermanded, and the troops had absolutely disembarked.

There was a cheer in the camp when the news was known, and Theodora started from her desolation, surprised that there

could be in such a scene a sound of triumph. Then there was another cheer, and though she did not move, but remained listening and leaning on her arm, the light returned to her eyes. The cheer was repeated, and there were steps about her tent. She caught the voice of Lothair speaking to her attendant, and adjuring her to tell her mistress immediately that there was good news, and that the French troops had disembarked. Then he heard her husband calling Theodora.

The camp became a scene of excitement and festivity which, in general, only succeeds some signal triumph. The troops lived always in the air, except in the hours of night, when the atmosphere of the mountains in the late autumn is dangerous. At present they formed groups and parties in the vicinity of the tents; there was their gay canteen and there their humorous kitchen. The man of the Gulf with his rich Venetian banter and the Sicilian with his scaramouch tricks got on very well

with the gentle and polished Tuscan, and could amuse without offending the high Roman soul; but there were some quips and cranks and sometimes some antics which were not always relished by the simpler men from the islands, and the offended eye of a Corsican sometimes seemed to threaten 'vendetta.'

About sunset, Colonel Campian led forth Theodora. She was in female attire, and her long hair restrained only by a fillet reached nearly to the ground. Her Olympian brow seemed distended; a phosphoric light glittered in her Hellenic eyes; a deep pink spot burnt upon each of those cheeks usually so immaculately fair.

The General and the chief officers gathered round her with their congratulations, but she would visit all the quarters. She spoke to the men in all the dialects of that land of many languages. The men of the Gulf, in general of gigantic stature, dropped their merry Venetian stories and fell down on their knees and kissed the

hem of her garment; the Scaramouch forgot his tricks, and wept as he would to the Madonna; Tuscany and Rome made speeches worthy of the Arno and the Forum; and the Corsicans and the islanders unsheathed their poniards and brandished them in the air, which is their mode of denoting affectionate devotion. As the night advanced, the crescent moon glittering above the Apennine, Theodora attended by the whole staff, having visited all the troops, stopped at the chief fire of the camp, and in a voice which might have maddened nations sang the hymn of Roman liberty, the whole army ranged in ranks along the valley joining in the solemn and triumphant chorus.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

THIS exaltation of feeling in the camp did not evaporate. All felt that they were on the eve of some great event, and that the hour was at hand. And it was in this state of enthusiasm, that couriers arrived with the intelligence that Garibaldi had escaped from Caprera, that he had reached Nerola in safety, and was in command of the assembled forces; and that the General was, without loss of time, to strike his camp, join the main body at a given place, and then march to Rome.

The breaking-up of the camp was as the breaking-up of a long frost and the first scent of spring. There was a brightness in every man's face and a gay elasticity in all their movements. But when the order of the day informed them that they must

prepare for instant combat, and that in eight and forty hours they would probably be in face of the enemy, the hearts of the young recruits fluttered with strange excitement, and the veterans nodded to each other with grim delight.

It was nearly midnight when the troops quitted the valley through a defile in an opposite direction to the pass by which they had entered it. It was a bright night. Colonel Campian had the command of the division in advance, which was five hundred strong. After the defile, the country though hilly was comparatively open, and here the advanced guard was to halt until the artillery and cavalry had effected the passage, and this was the most laborious and difficult portion of the march, but all was well considered, and all went right. The artillery and cavalry by sunrise had joined the advanced guard who were bivouacking in the rocky plain, and about noon the main columns of the infantry began to deploy from the heights, and



in a short time the whole force was in the field. Soon after this some of the skirmishers who had been sent forward returned, and reported the enemy in force and in a strong position, commanding the intended route of the invading force. On this the General resolved to halt for a few hours, and rest and refresh the troops, and to recommence their march after sunset, so that, without effort, they might be in the presence of the enemy by dawn.

Lothair had been separated from Theodora during this to him novel and exciting scene. She had accompanied her husband, but when the whole force advanced in battle array, the General had desired that she should accompany the staff. They advanced through the night, and by dawn they were fairly in the open country. In the distance, and in the middle of the rough and undulating plain, was a round hill with an ancient city, for it was a bishop's see, built all about and over it. It would have looked like a gigantic beehive, had it not

been for a long convent on the summit, flanked by some stone pines, as we see in the pictures of Gaspar and Claude.

Between this city and the invading force, though not in a direct line, was posted the enemy in a strong position; their right wing protected by one of the mounds common in the plain, and their left backed by an olive wood of considerable extent, and which grew on the last rocky spur of the mountains. They were therefore, as regards the plain, on commanding ground. The strength of the two forces was not unequal, and the Papal troops were not to be despised, consisting among others of a detachment of the legion of Antibes and the Zouaves. They had artillery, which was well posted.

The General surveyed the scene, for which he was not unprepared. Disposing his troops in positions in which they were as much protected as possible from the enemy's fire, he opened upon them a fierce and continuous cannonade, while he ordered

Colonel Campian and eight hundred men to fall back among the hills, and following a circuitous path, which had been revealed by a shepherd, gain the spur of the mountains and attack the enemy in their rear through the olive wood. It was calculated that this movement, if successful, would require about three hours, and the General, for that period of the time, had to occupy the enemy and his own troops with what were in reality feint attacks.

When the calculated time had elapsed, the General became anxious, and his glass was never from his eye. He was posted on a convenient ridge, and the wind, which was high this day from the sea, frequently cleared the field from the volumes of smoke; so his opportunities of observation were good. But the three hours passed, and there was no sign of the approach of Campian, and he ordered Sarano with his division to advance towards the mound and occupy the attention of the right wing of the enemy; but very shortly after Lothair

had carried this order, and four hours having elapsed, the General observed some confusion in the left wing of the enemy, and instantly countermanding the order, commanded a general attack in line. The troops charged with enthusiasm, but they were encountered with a resolution as determined. At first they carried the mound, broke the enemy's centre, and were mixed up with their great guns; but the enemy fiercely rallied, and the invaders were repulsed. The Papal troops retained their position, and their opponents were in disorder on the plain and a little dismayed. It was at this moment that Theodora rushed forward, and waving a sword in one hand, and in the other the standard of the Republic, exclaimed 'Brothers, to Rome!'

This sight inflamed their faltering hearts, which after all were rather confounded than dismayed. They formed and rallied round her, and charged with renewed energy at the very moment that Campian had

brought the force of his division on the enemy's rear. A panic came over the Papal troops, thus doubly assailed, and their rout was complete. They retreated in the utmost disorder to Viterbo, which they abandoned that night and hurried to Rome.

At the last moment, when the victory was no longer doubtful, and all were in full retreat or in full pursuit, a Zouave, in wantonness firing his weapon before he threw it away, sent a random shot which struck Theodora, and she fell. Lothair, who had never left her during the battle, was at her side in a moment, and a soldier, who had also marked the fatal shot; and, strange to say, so hot and keen was the pursuit, that though a moment before they seemed to be in the very thick of the strife, they almost instantaneously found themselves alone, or rather with no companions than the wounded near them. She looked at Lothair, but at first could not speak. She seemed stunned,

but soon murmured, 'Go, go; you are wanted.'

At this moment the General rode up with some of his staff. His countenance was elate and his eye sparkled with fire. But catching the figure of Lothair kneeling on the field, he reined in his charger and said, 'What is this?' Then looking more closely, he instantly dismounted, and muttering to himself, 'This mars the victory,' he was at Theodora's side.

A slight smile came over her when she recognised the General, and she faintly pressed his hand, and then said again, 'Go, go; you are all wanted.'

'None of us are wanted. The day is won; we must think of you.'

'Is it won?' she murmured.

'Complete.'

'I die content.'

'Who talks of death?' said the General. 'This is a wound, but I have had some worse. What we must think of now are remedies. I passed an ambulance this

moment. Run for it,' he said to his aide-de-camp. 'We must staunch the wound at once; but it is only a mile to the city, and then we shall find everything, for we were expected. I will ride on, and there shall be proper attendance ready before you arrive. You will conduct our friend to the city,' he said to Lothair, 'and be of good courage, as I am.'

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE troops were rushing through the gates of the city when the General rode up. There was a struggling and stifling crowd; cheers and shrieks. It was that moment of wild fruition, when the master is neither recognised nor obeyed. It is not easy to take a bone out of a dog's mouth; nevertheless the presence of the General in time prevailed, something like order was established, and before the ambulance could arrive, a guard had been appointed to receive it, and the ascent to the monastery, where a quarter was prepared, kept clear.

During the progress to the city Theodora never spoke, but she seemed stunned rather than suffering; and once, when Lothair, who was walking by her side,



caught her glance with his sorrowful and anxious face, she put forth her hand and pressed his.

The ascent to the convent was easy, and the advantages of air and comparative tranquillity, which the place offered, counterbalanced the risk of postponing, for a very brief space, the examination of the wound.

They laid her on their arrival on a large bed, without poles or canopy, in a lofty white-washed room of considerable dimensions, clean and airy, with high open windows. There was no furniture in the room except a chair, a table, and a crucifix. Lothair took her in his arms and laid her on the bed; and the common soldier who had hitherto assisted him, a giant in stature with a beard a foot long, stood by the bedside crying like a child. The chief surgeon almost at the same moment arrived with an aide-de-camp of the General, and her faithful female attendant, and in a few minutes her husband, himself wounded and covered with dust.

The surgeon at once requested that all should withdraw except her devoted maid, and they waited his report without, in that deep sad silence which will not despair, and yet dares not hope.

When the wound had been examined and probed and dressed, Theodora in a faint voice said, 'Is it desperate?'

'Not desperate,' said the surgeon, 'but serious. All depends upon your perfect tranquillity—of mind as well as body.'

'Well I am here and cannot move; and as for my mind, I am not only serene but happy.'

'Then we shall get through this,' said the surgeon encouragingly.

'I do not like you to stay with me,' said Theodora. 'There are other sufferers besides myself.'

'My orders are not to quit you,' said the surgeon, 'but I can be of great use within these walls. I shall return when the restorative has had its effect. But remember, if I be wanted, I am always here.'

Soon after this Theodora fell into a gentle slumber, and after two hours woke refreshed. The countenance of the surgeon when he again visited her was less troubled ; it was hopeful.

The day was now beginning to decline ; notwithstanding the scenes of tumult and violence near at hand, all was here silent ; and the breeze, which had been strong during the whole day, but which blew from the sea, and was very soft, played gratefully upon the pale countenance of the sufferer. Suddenly she said, ‘ What is that ? ’

And they answered and said, ‘ We heard nothing.’

‘ I hear the sound of great guns,’ said Theodora.

And they listened, and in a moment both the surgeon and the maid heard the sound of distant ordnance.

‘ The Liberator is at hand,’ said the maid.

‘ I dare say,’ said the surgeon.

‘ No ;’ said Theodora looking distressed.

‘The sounds do not come from his direction. Go and see, Dolores ; ask and tell me what are these sounds.’

The surgeon was sitting by her side, and occasionally touching her pulse, or wiping the slight foam from her brow, when Dolores returned and said, ‘Lady, the sounds are the great guns of Civita Vecchia.’

A deadly change came over the countenance of Theodora, and the surgeon looked alarmed. He would have given her some restorative, but she refused it. ‘No, kind friend,’ she said ; ‘it is finished. I have just received a wound more fatal than the shot in the field this morning. The French are at Rome. Tell me, kind friend, how long do you think I may live ?’

The surgeon felt her pulse ; his look was gloomy. ‘In such a case as yours,’ he said, ‘the patient is the best judge.’

‘I understand,’ she said. ‘Send then at once for my husband.’

He was at hand, for his wound had been dressed in the convent, and he came to Theodora with his arm in a sling, but with the attempt of a cheerful visage.

In the meantime, Lothair, after having heard the first, and by no means hopeless, bulletin of the surgeon, had been obliged to leave the convent to look after his men, and having seen them in quarters and made his report to the General; he obtained permission to return to the convent and ascertain the condition of Theodora. Arrived there, he heard that she had had refreshing slumber, and that her husband was now with her, and a ray of hope lighted up the darkness of his soul. He was walking up and down the refectory of the convent with that sickening restlessness which attends impending and yet uncertain sorrow, when Colonel Campian entered the apartment and beckoned to him.

There was an expression in his face which appalled Lothair, and he was about

to enquire after Theodora, when his tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth and he could not speak. The Colonel shook his head, and said in a low, hollow voice, 'She wishes to see you, and alone. Come.'

Theodora was sitting in the bed propped up by cushions when Lothair entered, and as her wound was internal, there was no evidence of her sufferings. The distressful expression of her face when she heard the great guns of Civita Vecchia had passed away. It was serious, but it was serene. She bade her maid leave the chamber, and then she said to Lothair, 'It is the last time I shall speak to you, and I wish that we should be alone. There is something much on my mind at this moment, and you can relieve it.'

'Adored being,' murmured Lothair with streaming eyes, 'there is no wish of yours that I will not fulfil.'

'I know your life, for you have told it me, and you are true. I know your nature; it is gentle and brave, but perhaps

too susceptible. I wished it to be susceptible only of the great and good. Mark me—I have a vague but strong conviction that there will be another, and a more powerful, attempt to gain you to the Church of Rome. If I have ever been to you, as you have sometimes said, an object of kind thoughts,—if not a fortunate, at least a faithful, friend,—promise me now, at this hour of trial, with all the solemnity that becomes the moment, that you will never enter that communion.'

Lothair would have spoken, but his voice was choked, and he could only press her hand and bow his head.

'But promise me,' said Theodora.

'I promise,' said Lothair.

'And now,' she said, 'embrace me, for I wish that your spirit should be upon me as mine departs.'

## CHAPTER XXIX.

It was a November day in Rome, and the sky was as gloomy as the heaven of London. The wind moaned through the silent streets, deserted except by soldiers. The shops were shut, not a civilian or a priest could be seen. The Corso was occupied by the Swiss Guard and Zouaves, with artillery ready to sweep it at a moment's notice. Six of the city gates were shut and barricaded with barrels full of earth. Troops and artillery were also posted in several of the principal piazzas, and on some commanding heights, and St. Peter's itself was garrisoned.

And yet these were the arrangements rather of panic than precaution. The utmost dismay pervaded the council-chamber of the Vatican. Since the news had ar-



rived of the disembarkation of the French troops at Marseilles, all hope of interference had expired. It was clear that Berwick had been ultimately foiled, and his daring spirit and teeming device were the last hope, as they were, the ablest representation, of Roman audacity and stratagem. The Revolutionary Committee, whose abiding-place or agents never could be traced or discovered, had posted every part of the city during the night with their manifesto, announcing that the hour had arrived ; an attempt, partially successful, had been made to blow up the barracks of the Zouaves ; and the Cardinal Secretary was in possession of information that an insurrection was immediate, and that the city would be fired in four different quarters.

The Pope had escaped from the Vatican to the Castle of St. Angelo, where he was secure, and where his courage could be sustained by the presence of the Noble Guard with their swords always drawn. The six score of Monsignori, who in their

different offices form, what is styled, the Court of Rome, had either accompanied his Holiness, or prudently secreted themselves in the strongest palaces and convents at their command. Later in the day news arrived of the escape of Garibaldi from Caprera ; he was said to be marching on the city, and only five and twenty miles distant. There appeared another proclamation from the Revolutionary Committee, mysteriously posted under the very noses of the guards and police, postponing the insurrection till the arrival of the Liberator.

The Papal cause seemed hopeless. There was a general feeling throughout the city and all classes, that this time it was to be an affair of Alaric or Genseric, or the Constable of Bourbon ; no negotiations, no compromises, no conventions, but slaughter, havoc, a great judicial devastation, that was to extirpate all signs and memories of Mediæval and Semitic Rome, and restore and renovate the inheritance of the true

offspring of the she-wolf. The very aspect of the place itself was sinister. Whether it were the dulness of the dark sky, or the frown of MADRE NATURA herself, but the old Seven Hills seemed to look askance. The haughty Capitol, impatient of its chapels, sighed once more for triumphs; and the proud Palatine, remembering the Cæsars, glanced with imperial contempt on the palaces of the Papal princelings that, in the course of ignominious ages, had been constructed out of the exhaustless womb of its still sovereign ruin. The Jews in their quarter spoke nothing, but exchanged a curious glance, as if to say, ‘Has it come at last? And will they indeed serve her as they served Sion?’

This dreadful day at last passed, followed by as dreadful a night, and then another day equally gloomy, equally silent, equally panicstricken. Even insurrection would have been a relief amid the horrible and wearing suspense. On the third day the Government made some wild arrests of the

wrong persons, and then came out a fresh proclamation from the Revolutionary Committee, directing the Romans to make no move until the advanced guard of Garibaldi had appeared upon Monte Mario. About this time the routed troops of the Pope arrived in confusion from Viterbo, and of course extenuated their discomfiture by exaggerating the strength of their opponents. According to them they had encountered not less than ten thousand men, who now having joined the still greater force of Garibaldi, were in full march on the city.

The members of the Papal party who showed the greatest spirit and the highest courage at this trying conjuncture, were the Roman ladies and their foreign friends. They scraped lint for the troops as incessantly as they offered prayers to the Virgin. Some of them were trained nurses, and they were training others to tend the sick and wounded. They organised a hospital service, and when the wounded

arrived from Viterbo, notwithstanding the rumours of incendiarism and massacre, they came forth from their homes, and proceeded in companies, with no male attendants but armed men, to the discharge of their self-appointed public duties. There were many foreigners in the Papal ranks, and the sympathies and services of the female visitors to Rome were engaged for their countrymen. Princesses of France and Flanders might be seen by the tressel beds of many a suffering soldier of Dauphiné and Brabant; but there were numerous subjects of Queen Victoria in the Papal ranks—some Englishmen, several Scotchmen, many Irish. For them the English ladies had organised a special service. Lady St. Jerome, with unflagging zeal, presided over this department; and the superior of the sisterhood of mercy, that shrank from no toil, and feared no danger in the fulfilment of those sacred duties of pious patriots, was Miss Arundel.

She was leaning over the bed of one who

had been cut down in the olive wood by a sabre of Campian's force, when a peal of artillery was heard. She thought that her hour had arrived, and the assault had commenced.

'Most holy Mary!' she exclaimed, 'sustain me.'

There was another peal, and it was repeated, and again and again at regular intervals.

'That is not a battle, it is a salute,' murmured the wounded soldier.

And he was right; it was the voice of the great guns telling that the French had arrived.

The consternation of the Revolutionary Committee, no longer sustained by Colonna, absent in France, was complete. Had the advanced guard of Garibaldi been in sight, it might still have been the wisest course to rise; but Monte Mario was not yet peopled by them, and an insurrection against the Papal troops, reanimated by the reported arrival of the French, and in-

creased in numbers by the fugitives from Viterbo, would have been certainly a rash and probably a hopeless effort. And so, in the midst of confused and hesitating councils, the first division of the French force arrived at the gates of Rome, and marched into the gloomy and silent city.

Since the interference of St. Peter and St. Paul against Alaric, the Papacy had never experienced a more miraculous interposition in its favour. Shortly after this the wind changed, and the sky became serene; a sunbeam played on the flashing cross of St. Peter's; the Pope left the Castle of Angelo, and returned to the Quirinal; the Noble Guard sheathed their puissant blades; the six score of Monsignori reappeared in all their busy haunts and stately offices; and the Court of Rome, no longer despairing of the Republic, and with a spirit worthy of the Senate after Cannæ, ordered the whole of its forces into the field to combat its invaders, with the prudent addition, in order to ensure a

triumph, of a brigade of French infantry armed with chassepots.

Garibaldi, who was really at hand, hearing of these events, fell back on Monte Rotondo, about fifteen miles from the city, and took up a strong position. He was soon attacked by his opponents, and defeated with considerable slaughter, and forced to fly. The Papal troops returned to Rome in triumph, but with many wounded. The Roman ladies and their friends resumed their noble duties with enthusiasm. The ambulances were apportioned to the different hospitals, and the services of all were required. Our own countrymen had suffered severely, but the skill and energy and gentle care of Clare Arundel and her companions only increased with the greater calls upon their beautiful and sublime virtue.

A woman came to Miss Arundel and told her that, in one of the ambulances, was a young man whom they could not make out. He was severely wounded, and had



now swooned; but they had reason to believe he was an Englishman. Would she see him and speak to him? And she went.

The person who had summoned her was a woman of much beauty, not an uncommon quality in Rome, and of some majesty of mien, as little rare in that city. She was said, at the time when some enquiry was made, to be Maria Serafina de Angelis, the wife of a tailor in the Ripetta.

The ambulance was in the courtyard of the hospital of the Santissima Trinita di Pellegrini. The woman pointed to it, and then went away. There was only one person in the ambulance; the rest had been taken into the hospital, but he had been left because he was in a swoon, and they were trying to restore him. Those around the ambulance made room for Miss Arundel as she approached, and she beheld a young man, covered with the stains of battle, and severely wounded; but his countenance was uninjured though

insensible. His eyes were closed, and his auburn hair fell in clusters on his white forehead. The sister of mercy touched the pulse to ascertain whether there yet was life, but, in the very act, her own frame became agitated, and the colour left her cheek, as she recognised—LOTHAIR.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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